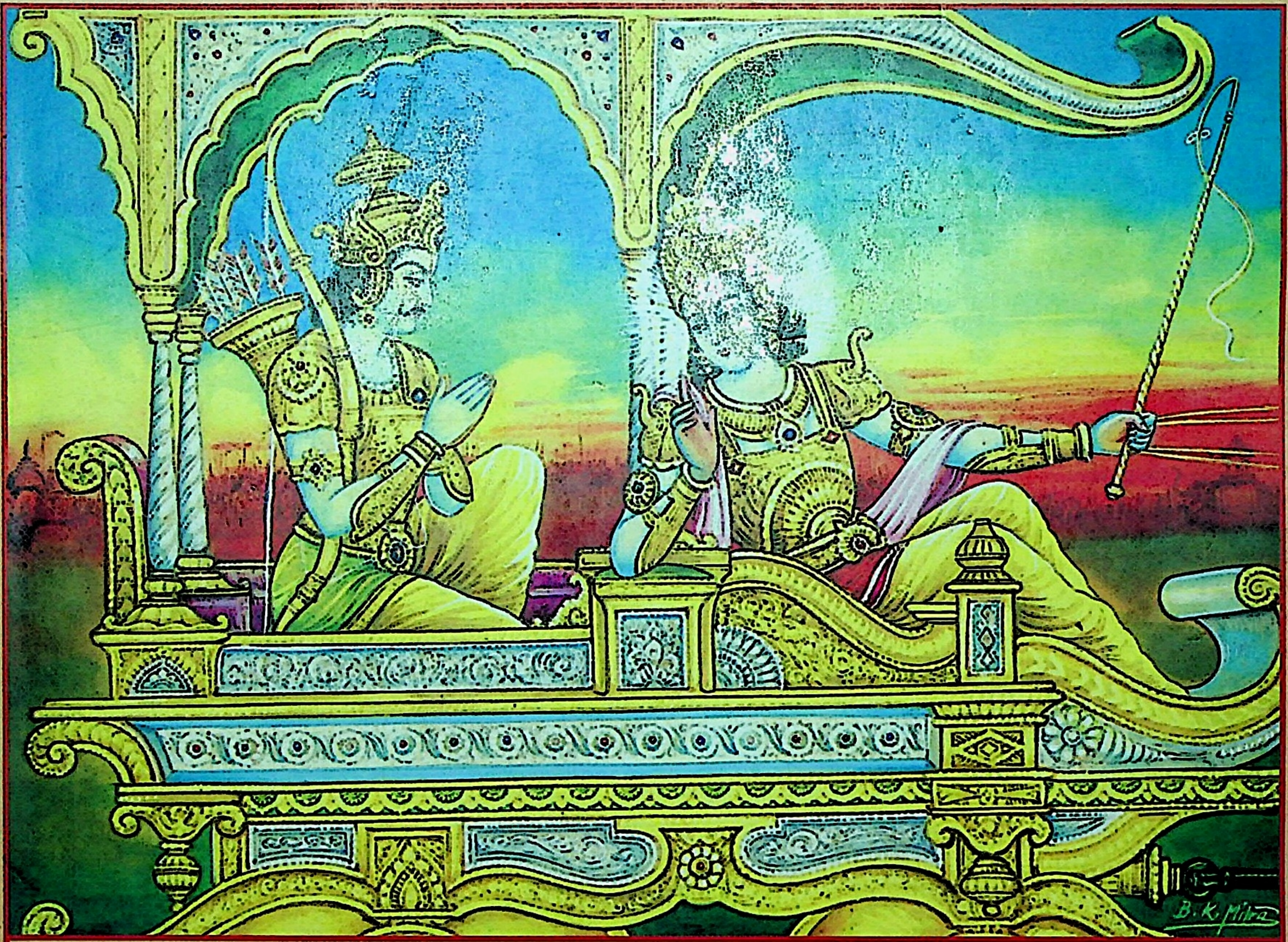
II Oṁ Śrī Paramātmane Namaḥ II

457

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ

TATTVAVIVECANĪ

(English Commentary)



yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ
tatra śrīrvijayo bhūtirdhruvā nītirmatirmama

GITA PRESS, GORAKHPUR

Jayadayal Goyandaka

Oṁ Śrī Paramātmane Namaḥ

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ

TATTVAVIVECANĪ

(English Commentary)

By **Jayadayal Goyandaka**

tvameva mātā ca pitā tvameva
tvameva bandhuśca sakhā tvameva
tvameva vidyā draviṇaṁ tvameva
tvameva sarvaṁ mama devadeva

त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव
त्वमेव बन्धुश्च सखा त्वमेव।
त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणं त्वमेव
त्वमेव सर्वं मम देवदेव॥

: 321742 (O), 331824 (R)
आलोक प्रकाशन
राजनियुक्त प्रकाशक
ज्ञानवापी-वाराणसी

Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India

First Edition to Nineteen Reprints		1,08,000 Copies
Twentieth Reprint	2006	5,000 Copies
	Total	1,13,000 Copies

Price : Seventy Rupees

ISBN 81-293-0031-1

Printed & Published by **Gita Press, Gorakhpur—273005 (INDIA)**
(a unit of Gobind Bhavan-Karyalaya, Kolkata)
© (0551) 2334721; Fax 2336997

website : **www.gitapress.org** | e-mail : **booksales@gitapress.org**

[457] G.T.V. 1 B

ॐ

A General Survey of the Gītā

Thou art Mother, Thou art Father,
Thou art Kinsman, Thou art Friend,
Thou art Knowledge, Thou art Wealth,
Thou art my all, O Lord of Lords!

Obeisance to Kṛṣṇa, Guide and Teacher of the world, son of Vasudeva, Chastiser of Kaṁsa and Cāṇūra, and Devakī's supreme delight.

GLORY OF THE GĪTĀ

The Bhagavadgītā contains divine words emanating from the lips of God Himself. Its glory is infinite, unlimited. None can really describe it. Even Śeṣa, the thousand-headed serpent-god, whose back forms the couch of God Viṣṇu, and Śiva and Gaṇeśa, cannot fully depict this glory. How can a puny mortal expect to do it ? The Epics and Purāṇas etc., have sung the glory of the Gītā at many places; but if all those words of praise are brought together, even then it cannot be declared that the praise of the Gītā has been exhausted. The fact is that a full description of the glory of the Gītā is never possible. For how can a thing which can be fully described remain unlimited ? It at once becomes finite and limited.

As a scripture, the Gītā embodies the supreme spiritual mystery and secret. It contains the essence of all the four Vedas. Its style is so simple and elegant that after a little study man can easily follow the structure of its words; but the thought behind those words is so deep and abstruse that even a lifelong, constant study does not show one the end of it. Everyday the book exhibits a new facet of thought hence the Gītā remains eternally new. And deep reflection with reverence and faith will make it directly appear impregnated with deep meaning at every step. The virtues, glory, essential character, truth, mystery and worship of God as well as the topics of Action and Knowledge have been discussed in the Gītā in such a way that its parallel can hardly be found in any other book. As a scripture, the Gītā is so incomparable that there is no word in it which is free from some instructive thought. There is not a single word in the Gītā, which may be described as flattering. Whatever statements have been made in it are true to the very letter. Smelling overpraise in the words of God, the very embodiment of Truth, is to show disrespect to the divine words.

The Gītā is an epitome of all the scriptures. The essence of all the scriptures is to be found in it. And it would be no exaggeration, indeed, if it is called the very store-house of all scriptural knowledge. For a mastery of the Gītā may lead one automatically to a comprehension of the truths contained in the other scriptures, and no separate study is required to obtain this knowledge.

The *Mahābhārata* also says: **'सर्वशास्त्रमयी गीता'**—"The Gītā comprises all the scriptures." (*Bhīṣma-Parva*, 44.4). But this statement too is inadequate. For all the scriptures have originated from the Vedas, the Vedas were revealed through Brahmā's mouths, and Brahmā himself took his descent from the Lord's navel. In this way, a great distance separates the scriptures from the Lord. But the Gītā has emanated directly from the lips

of the Lord; hence there will be no exaggeration if it is declared as superior to all the scriptures. The divine sage Vedavyāsa himself says:—

गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किमन्यैः शास्त्रसंग्रहैः।
या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य मुखपद्माद्विनिस्सृता॥

(*Mahābhārata, Bhīṣmaparva,* 43.1)

"The Gītā alone should be sung, heard, recited, studied, taught, pondered and assimilated properly and well. What is the use of collecting other scriptures ? For the Gītā has emerged directly from the lotus-like lips of God Viṣṇu Himself."

Through the word 'Padmanābha' in the above verse, the author of the *Mahābhārata* has brought out he very idea expressed by us. That is to say, the Gītā has emanated from the lips of the same Lord from whose navel Brahmā took His birth; and the Vedas, which are the source of all the scriptures, were revealed through the mouths of Brahmā.

The Gītā is superior even to the Gaṅgā. In the scriptures, liberation has been declared to be the reward of a bath in the Gaṅgā. But he who bathes in the Gaṅgā, though he can obtain liberation himself, does not acquire the power of liberating others. He, however, who takes a dive into the Gītā, not only gets liberated himself, but also gains the power of liberating others. The Gaṅgā has sprung from the feet of the Lord, whereas the Gītā has emanated directly from the divine lips. Again, while the Gaṅgā liberates him alone who goes to it and takes a plunge in its waters, the Gītā finds its way to every home, and shows the way to liberation to every individual. These are the reasons why the Gītā is declared as superior to the Gaṅgā.

The Gītā is superior even to the Gāyatrī. Through the practice of Japa of the Gāyatrī man attains liberation, no doubt. But he who practises Japa of the Gāyatrī secures liberation only for himself; whereas the student of the Gītā liberates not only himself but others as well. When the Dispenser of Liberation, God Himself, becomes his own, Mukti becomes a trifling affair to him. It takes up its abode in the dust of his feet. He makes a gift of Mukti to anyone and everyone who asks for it.

If we declare the Gītā as greater even than God, there will be no exaggeration. The Lord Himself says:—

गीताश्रयेऽहं तिष्ठामि गीता मे चोत्तमं गृहम्।
गीताज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य त्रींल्लोकान् पालयाम्यहम्॥

(*Vārāhapurāṇa*)

"I take My stand on the Gītā, the Gītā is My supreme abode. I maintain the three worlds on the strength of the wisdom contained in the Gītā".

Apart from this, in the Gītā itself the Lord openly declares that he who follows His instructions contained in the shape of the Gītā will undoubtedly attain liberation. Not only this, He further says that even he who studies this scripture will have worshipped Him through wisdom-sacrifice. When such is the value of a mere study of the Gītā, what shall we say of the man who has moulded his life according to its teachings, initiates God's devotees into its secrets and disseminates and propagates its teachings among them ? Referring to such a man, the Lord says that he is very dear to Him. It will be no exaggeration to say that he is dearer to God than His very life. The Lord subordinates Himself to the will of such devotees. Even in the case of noble souls, it is found that those who follow their teachings become dearer to them than their own life. The Gītā constitutes the Lord's principal mystic teaching. What wonder, then, that the follower of these teachings should be dearer to Him than even His life ?

The Gītā is the very life-breath, the heart and the verbal image of the Lord. He who has his heart, speech, body and all his

senses and their functions imbued with the Gītā is the very embodiment of the Gītā. His very sight, touch, speech and thought lend supreme sanctity to others, to say nothing of those who follow his precept and example. Really speaking, no sacrifice, charity, austerity, pilgrimage, religious vow, self-restraint and fasting etc., stand comparison with the Gītā.

The Gītā contains words directly emanating from the lips of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Its compiler is Maharṣi Vyāsa. The Lord uttered parts of His discourse in verse, which the compiler Vyāsa recorded exactly as they emanated from His lips. The part of it uttered in prose was versified by the compiler, and the words of Arjuna, Sañjaya and Dhṛtarāṣṭra were similarly versified by him in his own words, and dividing the book of seven hundred verses, into eighteen chapters, he made it an organic part of the *Mahābhārata.* This is how the book has come down to us.

PURPORT OF THE GĪTĀ

The Gītā is an unfathomable ocean of wisdom. In fact, an infinite store of knowledge lies imbedded in it. The greatest of savants, who have established their reputation by vanquishing their rivals in polemics, and sages engaged in the investigation of truth, find their words incapable of explaining its secrets. For its full meaning is known to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone. The next place may be assigned to its compiler, Vyāsa, and its direct recipient, Arjuna. The attempt, therefore, on the part of a man like me to fathom the depth of meaning and glory of such a book, full of deep esoteric import, is like the attempt of an ordinary bird winging to measure the extent of the boundless heavens.

The Gītā is a bottomless sea containing endless strata of meaning. Just as a diver diving deep into the sea lays his hands on precious gems, even so, diving deeper and deeper into the secrets of the Gītā, the seeker goes on discovering ever new piles of extraordinary gems of ideas. But the king of birds, Garuḍa, as well as the tiny mosquito both take their flight in the air, each according to his or its capacity. In the same way each and every student of the Gītā makes something out of it according to his or her comprehension.

Therefore, careful inquiry on the subject reveals that the primary aim of the Gītā is to lead the Jīva, merged in the ocean of worldly existence due to ignorance coming down from eternity, to the realization of God; and with this object in view the Gītā prescribes means by adopting which man can realize God even while scrupulously performing his worldly duties. This wonderful art of applying the spiritual truth in practical life has been revealed in the Gītā, which prescribes two paths for God-realization to suit the nature and qualification of the Sādhaka. These two paths are—(1) the Path of Knowledge or Sāṅkhyayoga, and (2) the Path of Yoga or Karmayoga (III.3).

Here it may be pointed out that almost all the scriptures have mentioned three principal ways to God-realization—(1) Action, (2) Worship and (3) Knowledge. How does the Gītā, then, speak of only two paths ? Does it not recognize the cult of devotion? Many students of the Gītā, however, understand its teachings as laying particular emphasis on Devotion, and the Lord too has brought out the special glory of Devotion in the clearest terms here and there (VI.47) and declared His realization as easy of attainment through Devotion (VIII.14). Our reply to this question is that the cult of 'Upāsanā' or Worship dealt with in the scriptures alongwith those of Action and Knowledge is covered by the two Paths mentioned above. When a man worships

God recognizing Him as one with him, such worship falls under Sāṅkhyaniṣṭhā or the Path of Knowledge; and when it is carried on in terms of diversity, it is comprised in Yoganiṣṭhā or the Path of Action. This constitutes the main difference between Sāṅkhyaniṣṭhā and Yoganiṣṭhā. Similarly, verse 24 of Chapter XIII speaks of God-realization through the practice of meditation alone; but there too it should be understood that meditation which is practised in terms of identity with God falls under Sāṅkhyaniṣṭhā, while that which is practised in terms of diversity is comprised in Yoganiṣṭhā. The popular belief that Devotion is the principal means to God-realization according to the Gītā is also correct. Devotion has been accorded a very high place in the Gītā and definite instructions have been given to Arjuna at several places to cultivate Devotion (IX.34; XII.8; XVIII.57, 65, 66). Nevertheless, the Gītā upholds only two Paths. According to it, Devotion forms part of the discipline of Yoga. And, inasmuch as Devotion involves activity, the above view upheld by the Gītā cannot be pronounced to be altogether opposed to reason. The question how Devotion goes with the discipline of Yoga will be examined later in the course of this discussion.

Besides, the various senses in which the two words 'Jñāna' and 'Karma' have been used in the Gītā also carry special significance. In the Gītā 'Karma' and Karmayoga, and so 'Jñāna' and Jñānayoga too, are not identical. According to the Gītā action prescribed by the scriptures can be performed from the points of view of both the Path of Knowledge and the Path of Yoga. Even the Path of Knowledge is not opposed to action as such; while in the Path of Yoga, performance of action alone has been recognized to be the Sādhanā or practice (VI.3), whereas actual renunciation of action is deemed to be a hindrance (III.4). In verses 47 to 51 of Chapter II, verse 19 of Chapter III and verse 42 of Chapter IV. Arjuna has been commanded to perform action following the Path of Yoga; while in III.28 and V.8, 9 and 13 the Lord tells us how to perform action from the point of view of the Path of Knowledge. There is no place for action with an interested motive in either of the two paths; on the other hand, the Lord declares men working with an interested motive as of meagre intelligence (II.42—44 and 49; VII.20—23; IX.20-21, 23-24).

The word 'Jñāna' too has not been used in Gītā in the sense of Jñānayoga (the Path of Knowledge) alone; it also signifies Self-realization, which is the culmination of all spiritual practices—of the Path of Knowledge as well as of the Path of Yoga,—and which is also called real Knowledge, or the Realization of Truth. Verse 24 and the latter half of verse 25 of Chapter IV speak of Jñānayoga or the Yoga of Knowledge, while verses 36 to 39 of the same chapter refer to 'Jñāna' or Self-realization, which is the culmination of all spiritual practices. In this way, at other places too the word should be interpreted according to the context in which it has been used.

An attempt will now be made briefly to discuss such topics as the essential character of the Path of Knowledge and the Path of Yoga, the main points of difference between them, their ramifications and the persons qualified to follow these paths and also whether the two paths are independent of each other or interdependent, and so on.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER OF THE TWO PATHS

(1) All objects are illusory or unreal like water seen in a mirage or like the world of

dream, so that all actions proceeding from the mind, senses and the body are nothing but the moving of Guṇas, born of Māyā (Nature), in the shape of the senses etc., among Guṇas in the shape of the various sense-objects. Realizing this, a follower of the Path of Knowledge no longer claims the doership of those actions (V.8-9). And remaining constantly established in identity with the all-pervading Supreme Spirit or God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, he ceases to recognize the existence of anything else than God (XIII.30). Such is the Path of Knowledge or 'Sāṅkhyaniṣṭhā' as it is called. It is also termed as 'Jñānayoga' or 'Karmasannyāsa'.

(2) A follower of the Path of Yoga, on the other hand, regards everything as belonging to God. He remains equipoised in success and failure and, renouncing attachment and the desire for fruit, performs all actions according to the behests of God (II.47—51). Or, resigning himself to God in thought, word and deed, he practises, with faith and reverence, constant meditation on His divine form, alongwith His name, virtues and glory (VI.47). This constitutes the Path of Yoga. It is this path which has been designated by various other names—e.g., Samatvayoga or Buddhiyoga, i.e., the Yoga of equanimity, 'Tadartha Karma' or 'Madartha Karma', i.e., working for the sake of God, and Sāttvika Tyāga or Renunciation of the Sāttvika type.

In the path of Yoga, Bhakti or Devotion does play a part, either in a general way, or as the ruling principle. The Path of Yoga as enunciated in the Gītā is not divorced from Devotion. Even those verses which do not explicitly mention Devotion of God (II.47—51) do involve obedience to the commandments of the Lord in any case; and that too is conducive to God-realization. In this sense Bhakti indirectly figures there too.

For actually treading the Path of Knowledge, the Lord has suggested several processes, the fruit of all of which is the same, viz., realization of God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. Although having many subordinate types, the Yoga of Knowledge, may be divided into four main types. They may be represented by the following guiding principles:—

(1) All that exists is Brahma and Brahma alone.

(2) All phenomenal existence is illusory; in fact, nothing exists but Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified.

(3) All that appears is my own self—it is I.

(4) Whatever appears is illusory and transient, and has no real existence; I, the one eternal conscious Self, exists.

Among these, the practices based on the first two maxims have reference to the word 'Tat' (That) in the Vedic formula 'Tattvamasi' (Thou art That), while the last two have reference to the word 'Tvam' (Thou). The principles given above may be elaborated as follows:—

(1) Whatever appears in this world of animate and inanimate beings is Brahma; nothing is different from God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. Whatever action we perform, the means and materials of that action, and the doer himself—all that is Brahma (IV.24). Just as blocks of ice floating in an ocean are pervaded, both inside and outside, by water and water alone, and the blocks themselves are nothing but water, even so all animate and inanimate beings are pervaded, both inside and outside, by God and God alone, and it is He who exists in the form of all those beings (XIII.15).

(2) Negating all phenomenal existence

as illusory, momentary and perishable, and realizing that the substratum of them all, viz., God alone, exists, and nothing besides God, even the mind and intellect should be merged into Brahma; and thus establishing himself in identity with God, the Sādhaka should become one with Him through direct realization (V.17).

(3) The whole animate and inanimate creation is Brahma, and that Brahma is my own self; hence all this is my own self. Following this line of thought, the Sādhaka should look upon all animate and inanimate beings as his own self.

In the eyes of the Sādhaka who carries on the above practice, nothing remains but Brahma; it is in that being of his, which is the same as Knowledge and Bliss solidified, that he now delights (V.24; VI.27; XVIII.54).

(4) Regarding all this phenomenal existence, which is illusory and a product of the three Guṇas, and all activities proceeding from it, as apart from one's self, perishable and transient, and totally negating them all, the Self alone should be realized as the only Existence (XIII.2, 34).

In order to enable the Sādhaka to attain the above state of mind, the Lord has inculcated on the mind of the Sādhaka, through various devices and at more than one place, the truth that the self is the seer, witness conscious and eternal, and that all material, objective existence such as the body etc.,—all that appears—is transient, and therefore unreal; the Self alone is real. In order to support this very view, the Lord devotes verses 11 to 30 of Chapter II to a discussion of the eternal, pure, awakened, formless, changeless, actionless and transcendent Self. Sādhakas who look upon God as their own self attain Self-realization only when they proceed with their Sādhanā regarding the soul as possessed of these characteristics. Whatever action is taking place is nothing but the play of the Guṇas among themselves; the Self has nothing to do with them (V.8, 9; XIV.19)—it neither does anything itself nor causes anything to be done. Realizing this they constantly and eternally feel supreme joy within their own self (V.13).

Of the four practices of Jñānayoga mentioned above, the first two are associated with the worship of Brahma, while the third and the fourth are conjoined with the form of worship in which the worshipper regards the deity as his own self.

Here the question arises: Are the above four practices to be carried on at the end of abstract meditation, or during the meditation itself ? Or, can they be followed in both the states ? Our reply to this question is that only the process delineated at the end of Section (4) above, which proceeds on the lines indicated in V.9, is to be practised while dealing with the world; whereas that given at the beginning of Section (2) and which has to be practised according to verse 17 of Chapter V, is to be carried on only during meditation. The rest can ordinarily be practised in both the states.

In this connection the following extracts from the Gītā attract our special notice:—

(1) वासुदेवः सर्वमिति —'Whatever appears is the same as God' (VII.19); and

(2) सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः— 'He who, established in unity, worships Me as residing in all beings as their self' (VI.31). One may ask here: Why have these not been mentioned in connection with the processes delineated in Section (1) above ? Our reply to this question is that both these verses occur in the context of Bhakti and both relate to a God-realized soul; hence they have not been mentioned in connection with the first practice. Should, however, anyone treat these verses as bearing on the path of Knowledge

and desire to carry on practice in accordance with the same, there can be no objection to it.

Just as the discipline of Knowledge has been divided into four types as above; even so the discipline of Yoga may be classified under three main heads:—

(1) Karmayoga with special emphasis on Action.

(2) Karmayoga blended with Devotion.

(3) Karmayoga dominated by Devotion.

(1) Karmayoga with special emphasis on Action consists in performing duties enjoined by the scriptures with due regard to one's grade in society and stage in life, completely renouncing the desire for fruit and attachment in respect of all actions and worldly objects. In His teaching on this type of Karmayoga, the Lord has at some places insisted on the renunciation of the fruit alone (V.12; VI.1; XII.11; XVIII.11); at other places He has laid stress on the renunciation of attachment alone (III.19; VI.4); while at still other places He has demanded the renunciation of the fruit as well as of attachment (II.47, 48; XVIII.6, 9). Where stress has been laid on the renunciation of the fruit alone, renunciation of attachment too should be taken as covered by the same; while in the context where renunciation of attachment alone has been insisted upon, renunciation of the fruit as well should be taken as implied in it. The discipline of Action is really consummated only when both the fruit and attachment are renounced.

(2) Karmayoga blended with Devotion: In this discipline the striver has been asked to worship God through the performance of duties appropriate to his Varṇa or grade in society, regarding Him as present in the whole universe (XVIII.46).

(3) Karmayoga dominated by Devotion: It is further divided into:—

(a) Offering of actions to God, and

(b) Action for the sake of God.

Offering of actions to God is also practised in two ways. In that which is known as 'complete surrender' the striver renounces the feeling of mineness, attachment and the desire for fruit in respect of all actions. He believes that everything belongs to God, that he too is God's, and whatever acts are performed by him are also His, and that it is God who is getting everything done by him as the showman gets things done by his puppet. And with this belief he performs duties prescribed in the Śāstras according to His behests and for His pleasure alone (III.30; XII.6; XVIII.57,66).

Besides this, an act done with some other motive in the first instance may at a later stage be offered to God; it may be offered in the middle even during the process of its performance; it may be offered as soon as it is completed; or its fruit alone may be offered. All these are so many forms of offering one's actions to God, even though they represent only its initial stage. It is through the continued practice of these preliminary stages that the stage of 'complete surrender' as referred to above is ultimately reached.

'Action for the sake of God' is also of two kinds:—

Duties enjoined by the scriptures, which are performed according to the behests of God, with the object of God-realization or attainment of Divine Love, or for the sake of God's pleasure, and even so offering worship to the Lord's images etc., and other acts of worship such as the practice of adoration and meditation etc.,—which are performed for the sake of God alone and which are even externally connected with God,—both these are included in 'actions for the sake of God'. Both these

types of actions have been referred to in the Gītā by the terms 'Matkarma' and 'Madartha-Karma' (XI.55; XII.10).

That which has been spoken of as exclusive Devotion or the Yoga of Devotion (VIII.14, 22; IX.13, 14, 22, 30, 34; X.9; XIII.10; XIV.26) is also included in the two types of action represented by the words 'Bhagavadarpaṇa' (action offered to God) and 'Bhagavadartha' (action for the sake of God). The fruit of all these is the same, viz., God-realization.

The next question is, "Is the Path of Yoga an independent means to God-realization, or does it contribute to God-realization as an auxiliary to the Path of Knowledge ?" Our reply to this question is that the Gītā subscribes to both these views. In other words, the Gītā holds the Path of Yoga to be both an independent means to God-realization or Liberation and as subsidiary to the Path of Knowledge. If the striver so desires, he can, without the help of the discipline of Knowledge, attain the highest perfection directly through the practice of Karmayoga; or, obtaining access to the Path of Knowledge through Karmayoga, he can realize God by treading the Path of Knowledge. Which of the two courses he should adopt depends on his predilection or predisposition. That the Path of Yoga is an independent means has been clearly affirmed by the Lord in V.4 and 5, as well as in XIII.24. That he who works for God alone, fixing his mind on Him, realizes Him through His grace, has also been declared by the Lord at several places (VIII.7; XI.54, 55; XII.6—8).

Even so disinterested action and worship both can also play their part as subsidiary to the Path of Knowledge (V.6; XIV.26). But, as Jñānayoga is characterized by a form of worship in which the worshipper looks on God as his own self, the path of Knowledge cannot be auxiliary to Bhaktiyoga, or the Path of Yoga, in which the worshipper views God as distinct from him. It is quite another thing if a follower of the Path of Knowledge later on finds his inclination or opinion changed and, giving up this path takes to the Path of Yoga, and then realizes God through this latter path.

Here it may be asked: What is the process followed by those who, having taken to Karmayoga or the Path of Yoga in the beginning, realize God later on through the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga or the Yoga of Knowledge ? The process followed by such strivers may be referred to by the term 'Tyāga' or renunciation and divided into the following seven stages:—

(1) TOTAL RENUNCIATION OF PROHIBITED ACTS

This consists in wholly abstaining, in thought, word and deed, from vile deeds prohibited by the scriptures, such as thieving, adultery, lying, duplicity, chicanery, coercion, violence, taking forbidden food, indulgence in frivolities etc. This is the first stage of Renunciation.

(2) RENUNCIATION OF ACTIONS MOTIVATED BY DESIRE

This means ceasing to perform, with a selfish motive, sacrifices, charity, penance, worship and other actions motivated by desire, which are generally performed with a view to obtaining agreeable object, such as wife, progeny and wealth etc., or with the object of securing freedom from some ailment or ridding oneself of other calamities. This is the second stage of Renunciation.

If by chance one is confronted with a duty, secular or sacred, which is outwardly motivated by desire, but the omission of

which is calculated to cause pain to anyone or interferes with the time-honoured institutions of Action and Worship, there is no objection to one's performing it disinterestedly, and only for the good of the world. Thereby he will not be deemed to have performed an act motivated by desire.

(3) COMPLETE RENUNCIATION OF THIRST FOR WORLDLY OBJECTS

This consists in giving up the thirst for enhancing one's honour, fame, social prestige and the number of one's wives, progeny and whatever other objects of a transient nature have fallen to one's lot, regarding them as an obstacle to God-realization. This is the third stage of Renunciation.

(4) RENUNCIATION OF THE PRACTICE OF TAKING SERVICE FROM OTHERS WITH A SELFISH MOTIVE

Asking for money or bodily service from another for one's own gratification and accepting articles or bodily service offered without one's asking for the same and seeking to attain one's selfish end through anyone by any means whatsoever—all this is included in taking service from another with a selfish motive. Renunciation of all these is the fourth stage of Renunciation.

If non-acceptance of physical service from another, or of refreshments etc., offered by another, where one is entitled to receive such service or offer, causes any pain to anyone, or in any way hinders the maintenance of the world order, accepting service on such an occasion in an unselfish spirit, and only for the pleasure of those offering it, would not be blameworthy. For, non-acceptance of service offered by one's own wife, son or servant, or of refreshments etc., offered by friends and relatives etc., is likely to cause them pain and may prove harmful, so far as propriety of social conduct is concerned.

(5) ABSOLUTE RENUNCIATION OF SLOTH AND THE DESIRE FOR FRUIT IN RESPECT OF ALL ONE'S DUTIES

Devotion to God, worship of gods, service to one's parents and other elders, performance of sacrifices, charity and penance, earning one's livelihood appropriate to one's grade in society and stage in life and bodily functions such as taking of food and drink and so on—all these constitute one's duty. Giving up sloth and every form of desire in respect of these is the fifth stage of Renunciation.

(6) TOTAL RENUNCIATION OF THE SENSE OF MEUM AND ATTACHMENT WITH REGARD TO ALL WORLDLY OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

All worldly objects like wealth, house, clothes etc., all near and dear ones like wife, children, friends etc., and all forms of enjoyment of this world and the next like honour, fame, prestige etc., are momentary and perishable, and should be regarded as impermanent; and there should be no sense of meum and attachment with regard to them. Similarly, having developed exclusive and unadulterated love for God alone, one should cease to entertain all sense of meum and attachment with regard to actions performed through the mind, speech and body and even with respect to the body itself. This is the sixth type of Renunciation.

Men who have reached this sixth stage of Renunciation develop dispassion for all objects of the world; and God, who is the supreme embodiment of Love, becomes the only object of their attachment. Therefore,

hearing and telling and mentally dwelling on the stories of spotless divine Love, which reveal His virtues, glory and mystery, and practising constant adoration and meditation and pondering the hidden meaning of the scriptures while living in a secluded place are their only favourite pursuits. They do not like to live in the midst of sensual men or to waste even a moment of their valuable time in mirth, luxury, carelessness, vilification of others, sensuous enjoyments and idle talk etc., and they perform all their duties in a disinterested way only for God's sake, dwelling all the time on His Name and Form.

The above six stages of Renunciation constitute the practice of Karmayoga. Through the continued practice of this discipline the Sādhaka realizes the truth about God by His grace, and thereby attains the imperishable supreme state (XVIII.56).

Should, however, anyone seek to realize God through Sāṅkhyayoga or the Path of Knowledge, he should, after practising the above six forms of Renunciation, tread the Path of Knowledge on the lines of the following seventh stage:—

(7) COMPLETE RENUNCIATION OF LATENT DESIRE AND SELF IDENTIFICATION WITH REGARD TO THE WORLD, ONE'S OWN BODY AND ALL ACTIONS

Being products of Māyā all objects of the world are wholly transient, and God alone, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, is equally present everywhere with this conviction one should erase from one's mind all thoughts of worldly objects, including the body and every form of activity even in the form of impressions. And completely renouncing self-identification with the body, one should totally disclaim doership with regard to all actions performed by the mind, speech and body, and get firmly and constantly established in identity with God. This is the seventh stage of Renunciation.

Through such practice the Sādhaka easily and immediately succeeds in realizing God (VI.28). But the striver who adopts the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga from the very beginning, without going through the discipline of Karmayoga as outlined in the foregoing paragraphs, attains God with difficulty.

सन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः । (V.6)

Here the question arises: Is it possible for a striver to practise both the disciplines simultaneously ? If not, why not ? Our reply to this question is that the two disciplines of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga cannot be followed by the same striver at one and the same time. For, during the process of his Sādhanā, the Karmayogī recognizes action, the fruit of action, God and his own self as distinct entities and, renouncing the fruit of action and attachment, performs all his duties for the sake of God, or as an offering to God (III.30; V.10; XI.55; XII.10; XVIII.56-57). The Sāṅkhyayogī, on the other hand, disclaims the doership with regard to all actions performed by his mind, senses and body, regarding them as nothing but the moving of the Guṇas—which are the products of Māyā, among themselves, or that of the senses among their objects, and remains established in identity with the all-pervading Divinity, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified (III.28; V.13; XIII.29; XIV.19-20; XVIII.49—55). The Karmayogī regards himself as the doer of actions (V.11); the Sāṅkhyayogī does not (V.8, 9). The Karmayogī offers his actions to God (IX.27-28); the Sāṅkhyayogī does not recognize actions, performed by the mind and senses without any sense of doership, as actions at all (XVIII.17). The Karmayogī views God

as apart from him (XII.10); the Sāṅkhyayogī looks on Him as ever identical with him (XVIII.20). The Karmayogī recognizes the existence of Prakṛti and all objects evolved from Prakṛti (XVIII.61); the Sāṅkhyayogī refuses to recognize the existence of anything other than Brahma (XIII.30). The Karmayogī recognizes the existence of Karma and its fruit; the Sāṅkhyayogī, on the other hand, neither recognizes the existence of any action or its fruit as apart from Brahma, nor claims to have any connection with such action. Thus the process of Sādhanā as well as the views of the two types of strivers are poles asunder. Under the circumstances, it is not possible for the same individual to follow the two disciplines at one and the same time. Just as a person, intending to travel from India to New York in America, would reach America if he continues to travel along the correct route either purely eastward or purely westward, even so, though the disciplines of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga proceed on altogether different lines, a Sādhaka who resolutely pursues either will speedily reach the supreme common goal of both, viz., God (V.4).

QUALIFICATION FOR THE TWO PATHS

The question now remains: Who are qualified for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga as taught by the Gītā ? Are they open to all irrespective of class, creed or nationality or only persons belonging to a particular Varṅa or grade in society, a particular Āśrama or stage in life and a particular community are eligible for their practice ? Our reply to this question is that, although the method of spiritual discipline as enunciated by the Gītā is wholly Indian in character, and has been followed by the Ṛṣis or seers of Vedic Mantras, nevertheless on a careful reflection on the teachings of the Gītā, it can be safely asserted that the spiritual disciplines taught in the Gītā can be practised by all human beings. This gospel of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Teacher of the whole world that He is, is intended for all mankind—and not for any particular class or order. This constitutes a distinctive feature of the Gītā. The Lord has made this point abundantly clear in the course of His teachings by using words like 'Mānavaḥ' (a human being), 'Naraḥ' (man), 'Dehabhṛt' (an embodied soul), 'Dehī' (one possessed of a body) etc., at several places. While enunciating the fundamental practice of Sāṅkhyayoga, the Lord throws it open to all humanity by using the word 'Dehī' in that context (V.13). Similarly, the Lord declares in unequivocal terms that any human being can attain perfection by worshipping the all-pervading Divinity through the performance of duties alloted to him by the scriptures (XVIII.46). Even so with regard to Devotion, the Lord declares women, the Śūdras (members of the labouring class) and even those of vile birth as qualified to practise it (IX.32). And wherever else the Lord teaches any particular discipline, He never restricts its practice to men belonging to a particular Varṇa, Āśrama or community alone.

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that all actions are not suited to all individuals. That is why the Lord lays great emphasis on Varṇa-Dharma or the division of duties according to different Varṇas or castes. Only those actions that have been prescribed for a particular Varṇa or grade in society constitute the duty of that Varṇa, and not those prescribed for any other Varṇa. It is by this principle that one's action should be governed. Every man can perform duties allotted to him by such Varṇadharma (or the code of conduct prescribed for the different Varṇas or castes) according to his qualifications and taste.

Apart from the duties prescribed for one's Varṇa or grade in society, duties prescribed for the whole of humanity, such as right conduct and devotion etc., can be practised by all.

Some people hold the view that only those belonging to the order of Sannyāsa, and members of no other Āśrama or order are eligible for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga. This too does not appear to be supported by reason. In verse 18 of Chapter II, the Lord commands Arjuna to fight even from the point of view of Sāṅkhya. If He recognized Sannyāsīs alone as qualified for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga, He could never have commanded Arjuna to fight from the said point of view. For the order of Sannyāsa shuts out all action, much more terrible deeds like fighting. Moreover, Arjuna was no Sannyāsī or recluse either, and the Lord has even advised him to approach men of spiritual insight, and seek enlightenment from them (IV.34).

Apart from this, in verse 4 of Chapter III, the Lord declares that perfection in Sāṅkhyayoga cannot be attained merely by refraining from action. If the Lord regarded Sannyāsīs alone as qualified for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga, He would have declared renunciation of actions as indispensable for the same, rather than make the above statement. Not only this, in verses 7—11 of Chapter XIII, where He has enumerated various means of attaining wisdom, renunciation of attachment for and identification with son, wife, home etc., has also been mentioned as one such means— 'असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु'.

The question of giving up attachment for and identification with one's wife, children, wealth, home etc., arises only where there is connection with them. In the order of Sannyāsa, there is no connection with wife, children and so on. Such being the case, if Sannyāsīs alone were qualified to practise Jñānayoga, it was needless to mention renunciation of attachment for and identification with them as a means of attaining wisdom; for the question of renouncing them does not arise in the case of a Sannyāsī.

Again, in Chapter XVIII, where Arjuna makes a direct inquiry about the nature of Sannyāsa and Tyāga, the Lord discusses in verses 13 to 40 the subject of Sāṅkhyayoga or the Path of Knowledge in place of Sannyāsa, and nowhere mentions the order of Sannyāsa, the Lord implied the order of Sannyāsa by the word 'Sannyāsa', or if He regarded Sannyāsīs alone as qualified to practise Sāṅkhyayoga, He would have certainly mentioned this in clear terms on that occasion. All this definitely proves that the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga is equally open to the Sannyāsī as well as to the householder. Of course, it is true that for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga the order of Sannyāsa affords greater facilities, and in this sense the mode of life of a recluse may certainly be declared as better suited for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga than that of a householder.

In the practice of Karmayoga action is predominant and one is specially enjoined to perform the duty prescribed for one's grade in society (III.8; XVIII.45-46); on the other hand, renunciation of action has been declared as a hindrance in this path (III.4). Therefore, in the order of Sannyāsa, one cannot practise Karmayoga which lays special emphasis on Action; for in that order there is actual renunciation both of material objects and actions such as sacrifice and charity etc. Practice of devotion to God, however, can be carried on in all Āśramas. Hence the practice of Karmayoga dominated by Devotion is possible in all Āśramas.

There are people who labour under a misconception that the Gītā is useful only for

hermits and recluses, and is of no use to householders. That is why people generally keep their boys aloof from the Gītā under the obsession that a study of this book may lead them to renounce their household. But the above facts belie their apprehension. They fail to perceive that it was due to the supremely esoteric teaching of the Gītā that Arjuna,— who had, under a spell of delusion shrunk from his duty as a Kṣatriya and made up his mind to live on alms—remained a householder all his life and continued to perform his duties. How could the same Gītā produce such a contrary result in the case of our boys ? Not only that; the Deliverer of the Gītā, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, so long as He remained on earth as an Avatāra (a direct manifestation of the Deity), remained constantly engaged in action,— protected the virtuous, redeemed the wicked by putting an end to their earthly existence and established the kingdom of righteousness on earth. He even went the length of saying that if He did not scrupulously engage in action, people would follow His ways and give up their duty; and thus He would be responsible for creating confusion in society (III.23-24). This does not mean either that the Gītā is not meant for recluses. The Gītā is intended for men belonging to all Varṇas and Āśramas. All can undertake spiritual practice according to the principles of either Sāṅkhya or Yoga, for whichever they may be qualified, performing actions pertaining to their respective Varṇa or Āśrama.

DEVOTION IN THE GĪTĀ

The paths of Devotion, Knowledge and Action—all these have been discussed at length in the Gītā. Strivers following any of these paths can obtain sufficient material for their guidance in the book. Arjuna, however, was a devotee of the Lord; therefore, while throwing light on the various paths, whatever personal instructions are given to Arjuna for his own guidance, the Lord generally exhorts him to follow the Path of Action with special emphasis on devotion (III.30; VIII.7; XII.8; XVIII.57, 62, 65, 66). In some places, he has even been urged to action alone (II.48, 50; III.8, 9, 19; IV.42; VI.46; XI.33-34); but there too Devotion should be inferred as implied, drawing the inference from other places. In IV.34 the Lord directs Arjuna to approach the enlightened and seek enlightenment from them, and that too in order to show him the method of attaining Self-realization and by way of cautioning him. The Lord did not really mean to direct Arjuna to any enlightened soul to seek wisdom, nor did Arjuna actually seek wisdom anywhere according to the process mentioned in that verse. A reference to the beginning and end of the Gītā also leads one to the conclusion that the culmination of the Gītā lies in 'Self-surrender'. True, the teaching of the Gītā actually commences from the verse 'अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वम्' etc.,—"You grieve over those who should not be grieved for" (II.11); but the seed of this teaching is contained in Arjuna's statement in verse II.7 'कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभाव:' etc., in which the word 'Prapannam' (having taken refuge) reveals his spirit of self-surrender. That is why it is with a call to surrender that the Lord concludes His teaching with the words 'सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य'— 'Resigning all duties to Me' etc.

There is not a single chapter in the Gītā, in which there is no reference to Devotion at one place or another. By way of illustration the reader is referred to verse 61 of Chapter II, verse 30 of Chapter III, verse 11 of Chapter IV, verse 29 of Chapter V, verse 47 of Chapter VI, verse 14 of Chapter VII, verse 14 of Chapter VIII, verse 34 of Chapter IX, Verse 9 of Chapter X, verse 54 of Chapter

XI, Verse 2 of Chapter XII, verse 10 of Chapter XIII, verse 26 of Chapter XIV, verse 19 of Chapter XV, verse 1 of Chapter XVI (where the compound word 'Jñānayogavyavasthitiḥ' refers to the practice of meditation on God), verse 27 of Chapter XVII, and verse 66 of Chapter XVIII. In this way each and every chapter of the Gītā contains a reference to Devotion. Chapter VII to XII, in particular, contain copious references to Bhakti; that is why these six chapters have been recognized as dealing primarily with Bhakti. For the sake of illustration, only one verse from each chapter has been cited above.

Even so references to Knowledge too may be found in several chapters. By way of illustration the reader is referred to verse 29 of Chapter II, verse 28 of Chapter III, verse 24 of Chapter IV, verse 13 of Chapter V, verse 29 of Chapter VI, verse 13 of Chapter VIII, verse 15 of Chapter IX, verse 3 of Chapter XII, verse 34 of Chapter XIII, verse 19 of Chapter XIV and verse 49 of Chapter XVIII. Of all other chapters, Chapters II, V, XIII and XVIII in particular contain numerous verses dealing with the subject of Knowledge.

Even as the Gītā fully reveals the truth about Devotion and Knowledge, so does it unfold the secret of Action as well. Verses 39 to 53 of Chapter II, verses 4 to 35 of Chapter III, verses 13 to 32 of Chapter IV, verses 2 to 7 of Chapter V, and verses 1 to 4 of Chapter VI fully unravel the secret of Action. Of these, again, verse 47 of Chapter II and verses 16 to 18 of Chapter IV throw particular light on the subject of Action. Apart from these the topic of Action has been dealt with in other chapters too.

For dearth of space, more references are not being given here. All this shows that the Gītā does not only confine itself to a discussion of Devotion alone but throws ample light on all the three subjects of Knowledge, Action and Devotion.

GOD AS QUALIFIED AND ABSOLUTE, AND HIS WORSHIP

It has been stated above that whether we worship God as apart from ourselves, or as our own self, the fruit of both is the same. How is it true ? For, to him who worships God as other than himself, the Lord reveals His divine form; and when the worshipper leaves his body, he ascends to the Lord's own supreme Abode. He who worships God as his own self, on the other hand, becomes one with Brahma or the Absolute. There is no change of place for him. Our reply to this question is that what we have stated is true, and the objection raised above is also to the point. How the two facts can be reconciled, is being shown below.

The form of God-realization varies in every individual case according to the sentiment and faith of the worshipper during the period of his spiritual discipline. Those who worship Him in terms of identity, i.e., as their own self, realize Him in terms of identity; while to those who worship Him in terms of diversity, He reveals Himself as other than the worshipper. God is realized differently by different strivers according to their respective conviction.

Worship in terms of identity and worship in terms of diversity, both these constitute the worship of God; for God is both absolute and qualified, with form and without form, manifest and unmanifest, and what not. To those who regard Him as absolute and formless, He is devoid of attributes and form (XII.3). To those who look upon Him as qualified and formless, He is possessed of attributes though devoid of form (VIII.9). To those who view Him as almighty, all-supporting, all-pervading,

all-surpassing, i.e., adorned with all excellent virtues, He is endowed with all noble virtues (XV.15, 17, 19).* To those who hold Him as embracing everything, He embraces all (VII.7-12; IX.16-19). To those who recognize Him as possessed of form and attributes both, He reveals Himself as such (IV.8; IX.26).

What has been stated above is, no doubt, true; but this does not solve the basic point raised by the questioner, which stands as it is. The question was just this: When God is realized differently by different individuals, how can the fruit of the various disciplines be called one ? Our reply to this question is that the realization of God by the Sādhaka corresponds in the first instance with his own conception about God or with his sentiment in respect of Him. The realization of His true nature, that follows next, is beyond the range of speech; words fail to describe what it is like. The ultimate fruit of all forms of worship is one and the same, no matter whether He is worshipped in terms of identity or in those of diversity. In order to make this very point clear the Lord says that those who worship God in terms of identity realize the Lord Himself (XII.4; XIV.19; XVIII.55), and he who worships Him in terms of diversity becomes one with Brahma or the Absolute (XIV.26), secures lasting peace (IX.31), realizes Brahma (VII.29), attains the eternal, imperishable Abode (XVIII.56), and so on and so forth. It is in order to impress upon the mind of Arjuna the identity of fruit of both forms of worship—that carried on in terms of identity and that practised in terms of diversity—that the Lord expresses the same truth in various ways, both directly and indirectly. The goal to be attained, the truth to be realized by both the types of worshippers,—those who worship Him in terms of identity and those who worship Him in terms of diversity,—is one and the same; it has been mentioned in some places a 'supreme peace' and the 'eternal state' (XVIII.62), as the Supreme Abode at another (XV.6), and as 'Amṛta' (supreme Bliss) at still another (XIII.12). Again, it has been referred to at some places as the 'supreme state' (VIII.13), and at still others as 'highest perfection' (XVIII.45). It has been spoken of at one place as 'the imperishable supreme State' (XV.5), as 'Brahma who is all peace' at another (V.24) and as everlasting peace consisting of supreme Bliss' (VI.15) at still another. Besides these, many more words have been used in the Gītā to denote that ultimate fruit. But nothing can be said about it beyond the assertion that it is the fruit of all disciplines. It transcends speech. He alone, who has attained that object knows it; but he too cannot describe it. He can only hint at it by the use of the above or similar other words, even as we help a friend to pick out the new moon by pointing to a bough which appears to touch it. (This is what is known as the Śākhācandra-nyāya' in Sanskrit.) Hence the only reasonable conclusion is that the supreme Reality which is the 'fruit' of all spiritual practices, is one.

This reality of God is transcendent in character, a supreme mystery, and the secret of all secrets. He alone who has realized it, knows it. But even this assertion is made only with the object of pointing to that Reality. Considered logically, however, even this statement is wide of the mark.

EQUANIMITY IN THE GĪTĀ

Equanimity is the dominant note of the

* The verses referred to above mention only the excellent virtues of God. Hence the word 'Apohana, in XV.15 has been interpreted by us, not in the senses of effacement of memory and wisdom, but as that of doubt and misapprehension.

Gītā. The test of God-realization lies in the attainment of equanimity. In all the three paths of Knowledge, Action and Devotion, cultivation of equanimity has been declared as essential even as part of the discipline to be followed; and equanimity has been pointed out as a distinguishing mark of those who have realized God through any of the three paths. Divorced from equanimity, even spiritual practice is deficient, much more Realization. He who lacks equanimity cannot be called a realized soul. The use of the compound word 'Samaduḥkhasukham' (balanced in joy and sorrow) in II.15 denotes that of those who tread the Path of Knowledge only he who is possessed of equanimity is eligible for immortality or liberation. The latter half of II.48, which declares Yoga to consist in equanimity—'समत्वं योग उच्यते'—enjoins the follower of the Path of Action to maintain his balance of mind while performing his duties. And in verse 20 of Chapter XII, the Lord expects even a Sādhaka treading the Path of Devotion to practise equanimity. Even so equanimity finds a prominent place among the marks of a Guṇātīta or a realized Jñānayogī (XIV.24-25). Again, a realized Karmayogī has been declared as equipoised (VI.7-9) and equanimity has also been included among the marks of a realized devotee (XII.18-19).

In order to enable Arjuna to grasp the truth of this virtue easily and thoroughly, the Lord explains in the Gītā in different ways the conception of equanimity with reference to all living beings, actions, abstract ideas and objects. For example—

EVEN-MINDEDNESS TOWARDS MEN IN GENERAL

"He who looks upon well-wishers and neutrals as well as mediators, friends and foes, relatives and objects of hatred, the virtuous and the sinful, with the same eye, stands supreme" (VI.9).

EVEN-MINDEDNESS TOWARDS MEN AND ANIMALS

"The wise look with the same eye on a Brāhmaṇa endowed with learning and culture, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a pariah too" (V.18).

EVEN-MINDEDNESS TOWARDS ALL BEINGS

"Arjuna, he who looks on all as one, on the analogy of his own self, and looks upon the joy and sorrow of all with a similar eye,—such a Yogī is deemed the highest of all" (VI.32).

At some places, the Lord mentions equanimity with reference to men, actions, objects and abstract ideas together. For example—

"He who is alike to friend and foe, as well as to honour and ignominy, who remains balanced in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and other pairs of opposites, and is free from attachment (is dear to Me)" (XII.18).

In the above passage, 'friend' and 'foe' stand for men; 'honour' and 'ignominy' represent treatment by others, which is an action; 'heat' and 'cold' refer to objects; while 'joy' and 'sorrow' are abstract ideas.

"He who is ever established in the Self takes sorrow and joy alike, views a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold alike is possessed of wisdom, receives the pleasant as well as the unpleasant in the same spirit, and views censure and praise alike" (XIV.24).

In the above passage as well, 'sorrow' and 'joy' are abstract ideas; 'clod of earth,' 'stone' and 'gold' represent objects; 'censure' and 'praise' typify action by others; while

'pleasant' and 'unpleasant' refer to all the four, viz., beings, ideas, objects and actions.

In this way he who looks on all with the same eye, who, though entertaining the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' only in name in his dealings with the world, is even-minded towards all, who sees unity in the whole worlds;—such a man is possessed of equanimity and he alone is an advocate of equality in the real sense of the term.

There is a world of difference between the cult of equanimity preached by the Gītā and the doctrine of the so called equality preached by modern socialism. Modern socialism is anti-theistic in its outlook, whereas the cult of equanimity preached by the Gītā sees God everywhere and in everything. One uproots Religion, while the other upholds Religion at every step; one is violent in its conception, while the other establishes the principle of non-violence; one is based on self-interest, while the other has no room for selfishness. One, though abolishing all distinctions in the matter of interdining and social intercourse etc., maintains disunion in spirit; while the other, though maintaining due discrimination in the matter of interdining and social intercourse according to the bounds prescribed in the Śāstras, does not admit any disparity in spirit and exhorts us to perceive the Supreme Spirit as the same in all. The goal of one is mammon-worship, while that of the other is God-realization. In one there is identification with one's party and disrespect for others; while in the other there is complete absence of pride, and respect for all which comes from a sense of the immanence of God. In one, there is emphasis on external behaviour, while in the other it is the spirit which matters; in one it is material happiness which is of primary importance, while in the other it is spiritual happiness that counts; in one there is want of tolerance for others' wealth and others' views, in the other there is equal respect for all; one is dominated by partiality and prejudice, while the other prescribes conduct which is free from partiality and prejudice.

DESTINY OF JĪVAS AFTER DEATH

The Gītā mentions three grades of destinies, viz., high, middling and low, corresponding to the qualities (Guṇas) and actions of the Jīvas. The destiny of those who perform duties and worship prescribed in the Śāstras from the points of view of Karmayoga and Sāṅkhyayoga has been described in verse 24 of Chapter VIII. Of these, again, the destiny of those who fall from Yoga has been mentioned in verses 40 to 45 of Chapter VI. There it is stated that casting off their mortal coil they ascend to heaven and other worlds and, having enjoyed the pleasures of those celestial regions for a pretty long period, are reborn in the house of wealthy people of pious conduct. Or, without being temporarily transferred to heaven they are directly reborn in a Yogī's family and, driven once more to the practice of Yoga by the impulse of their previous Sādhanā, attain the supreme goal.

The destiny of those who perform the prescribed duties or worship with an interested motive has been described in verses 20 and 21 of Chapter IX; there it has been shown how those who perform sacrifices etc., prescribed in the Vedas with a desire to attain heaven ascend to that region, and how, on the stock of their merit being exhausted, they are hurled back to the mortal plane. The route and the process of their ascent to heaven have been delineated in the commentary on verse 25 of Chapter VIII above.

Verses 14, 15 and 18 of Chapter XIV

briefly describe in a general way the destiny of all men. When a man gives up the ghost during the preponderance of the quality of Sattva, he attains to the higher worlds; dying when Rajas is in the ascendant, one is born among men; and he who expires during the predominance of Tamas is born in the species of birds, beasts, insects, moths and trees etc. Even so a man established in Sattva ascends after death to the higher regions; men of a Rājasika disposition who are established in Rajas remain in the world of mortals; and men of a Tāmasika temperament who are established in Tamas descend in the scale of spiritual evolution, i.e., are cast into hell or born in sub-human species. In verses 19 to 20 of Chapter XVI the Lord says, with reference to Tāmasika men of a demoniac disposition, that He repeatedly throws them into demoniac wombs, i.e., the species of low-born creatures like dogs and swine etc., and subsequent to this they are cast into terrible hells. Similarly, in other places too the Gītā speaks of men attaining good or evil destiny according to their qualities and actions. The destiny of liberated souls has been described at length at many places in the shape of the goal of the Paths of Knowledge and Action.

SOME SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE GĪTĀ

(1) MEANS OF TESTING THE PREDOMINANCE OF GUṆAS

The Gītā has laid down certain definite standards of judging whether a particular object, idea or action belongs to the Sāttvika, Rājasika or Tāmasika type. They are as follows:—

(1) An idea or action which is untainted with selfishness, which is free from attachment and the sense of 'mine', and which is conducive to God-realization, should be regarded as Sāttvika.

(2) An idea or action which is tainted with greed, selfishness, and attachment, and which yields momentary pleasure and ultimately leads to sorrow should be regarded as Rājasika.

(3) An idea or action which is characterized by violence, infatuation and obstinate error, and which leads to sorrow and ignorance, should be regarded as Tāmasika.

Thus pointing out the distinguishing marks of ideas and actions of the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika types, the Lord enjoins us all to adopt those of the Sāttvika type and discard those of the other two types.

(2) PREDOMINANCE OF SPIRIT OVER ACTION IN THE GĪTĀ

Although the Gītā recognizes good conduct and a noble spirit both as conducive to blessedness, it lays emphasis on the spirit or one's mental attitude. In the marks of a stable-minded Yogī, a devotee and a Guṇātīta (one who has transcended the three Guṇas) given at the end of Chapters II, XII and XIV respectively, it is the spirit that has been emphasized (II.55—71; XII.13—19; XIV.22—25). In Chapters II and XIV, Arjuna's question has particular reference to conduct, but the Lord's reply lays emphasis on the spirit. In the eyes of the Gītā, most ordinary pursuits such as fighting, trade, agriculture and menial service etc., done in a disinterested spirit, are superior to the noblest acts like sacrifice, charity, penance, public service and worship etc., done with an interested motive, inasmuch as the former are conducive to liberation (II.40, 49; XII.12; XVIII.46). In Chapter IV too, which enunciates various practices in the form of so many sacrifices (IV.24—32), liberation has been shown to depend primarily on the spirit of the sacrificer.

GĪTĀ AND THE VEDAS

The Gītā shows great regard for the Vedas. By declaring Himself as worthy of being known by the Vedas, as the author of the Vedānta and the knower of the Vedas, the Lord enhances their glory to a great extent (XV.15). While speaking of the Pīpala tree in the shape of creation, the Lord says that he alone who knows "this tree with its roots in essence really knows the truth of the Vedas" (XV.1). The Lord shows thereby that the intention of the Vedas is to reveal the true character of the world together with its cause, viz., God. The Lord says that He simply reiterates what the Vedas have stated by the analytical process. Thus citing the Vedas as authority in support of His utterances, the Lord has exalted the Vedas to the skies. By declaring the three Vedas—Ṛk, Yajuṣ and Sāma—as His own selves He has accorded them a still greater honour. The Lord states that the Vedas have proceeded from Him (III.15; XVII.23). He further says that various means to God-realization have been taught in the Vedas (IV.32). Thereby He clearly indicates as it were that the Vedas do not merely enunciate practices which bring enjoyment in the world—as some unthinking men hold, but that they set forth, not one or two, but numerous ways to God-realization. While referring to His Reality as the "Supreme God", the Lord says that knowers of the Vedas term it as 'Akṣara' or the syllable Oṁ (VIII.11). By this statement too the Lord conveys the same idea, viz., that the Vedas do not merely speak of the transient enjoyments of this world and of heaven, which are the goal of men who are motivated by desire, but that they discuss at length the imperishable Reality of God as well. This makes it clear that the Lord has shown exceptional esteem and regard for the Vedas.

This raises the question: Why, then, did the Lord speak slightingly of the Vedas at several places ? For example, He has spoken of men obsessed by desire and devoted to the letter of the Vedas as unwise (II.42). Again, declaring the Vedas as dealing with the evolutes of the three Guṇas in the form of worldly enjoyments, as well as with the means of attaining such enjoyments, He has advised Arjuna to remain unattached to them (II.45). And referring to men who are motivated by the desire and devoted to the ritual enjoined by the three Vedas, the Lord says that they repeatedly come and go, and do not escape from the whirligig of birth and death (IX.21). What are we to understand from the above ?

Our reply to the above question is that, although the observations of the Lord referred to above appear to decry the Vedas, really speaking they do not. The Gītā values absolute desirelessness on the part of a doer or a worshipper much more than an interested spirit, and has declared the former as indispensable for God-realization. Hence it is with a view to declaring selfish motive with regard to one's actions or worship as lower than absolute desirelessness and as conducive to momentary sense-enjoyments, that the Lord has off and on proved it to be of no consequence; but He has nowhere denounced such spirit just as He has denounced prohibited acts. Even where He speaks of one's transcending the fruits held out by the Vedas, He only refers to the fruits of actions performed with an interested motive. Thus it is clear that nowhere in the Gītā does the Lord decry the Vedas; on the other hand, He has only extolled them every now and them.

GĪTĀ AND THE SCHOOLS OF SĀṄKHYA AND YOGA

Some people hold the view that wherever the word 'Sāṅkhya' occurs in the Gītā it stands for the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy founded by Maharṣi Kapila; but this does not appear to be a reasonable view. In three consecutive verses (Verses 19, 20 and 21) of Chapter XIII, and elsewhere too, the Gītā uses the words 'Prakṛti' and 'Puruṣa, together, and these are the two principal words of the Sāṅkhya terminology; this has led people to conclude that the Gītā unholds the doctrine of Sāṅkhya taught by Kapila. Similarly, some people interpret the word 'Yoga' too as referring to the school of philosophy of that name founded by Maharṣi Patañjali. At the beginning of Chapter V, and at many other places too, the words 'Sāṅkhya' and 'Yoga' have been used together; this has also contributed to the assumption that the words 'Sāṅkhya' and 'Yoga' respectively stand for the philosophical systems of those names attributed to sages Kapila and Patañjali. But the view does not appear to be supported by reason. The 'Sāṅkhya' referred to in the Gītā is not the same as the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy associated with the name of Kapila, nor is the 'Yoga' spoken of in the Gītā the same as the Yoga of Patañjali. This will be clear from the following:—

(1) The Sāṅkhya system of philosophy refuses to recognize God as conceived by the Gītā.

(2) Although the word 'Prakṛti' occurs at several places in the Gītā, there is a world of difference between 'Prakṛti' as conceived by the Gītā and the 'Prakṛti' of Sāṅkhya. According to the Sāṅkhya philosophy as taught by Kapila, 'Prakṛti' denotes a state of equilibrium of the three Guṇas. But the 'Prakṛti' of the Gītā is the cause of the three Guṇas, which are its evolutes (XIV.5). Sāṅkhya recognizes Prakṛti as without beginning and eternal; the Gītā does hold it to be without beginning (XIII.19), but not eternal.

(3) Similarly, there is a great difference between 'Puruṣa' as conceived by the Gītā and the 'Puruṣa' of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. According to Sāṅkhya. Puruṣas are many; but 'Sāṅkhya' as preached by the Gītā recognizes only one Puruṣa (XIII.22, 30; XVIII.20).

(4) The Gītā's conception of 'Mukti' also widely differs from 'Mukti' as taught by the Sāṅkhya system. According to the latter, Mukti or liberation consists in the final cessation of sorrow. In the 'Mukti' of the Gītā, however, there is not only final cessation of sorrow but in addition to it there is realization of God; who is an embodiment of supreme Bliss (VI.21-22).

(5) Besides the above doctrinal differences, the Yoga system of Patañjali defines 'Yoga' as the cessation of the functions of the mind. The Gītā however, uses the word 'Yoga' in different senses according to the context in which it occurs (*vide* commentary to II.53).

Thus there is a great difference between the teachings of the Gītā, on the one hand, and the teachings of the Sāṅkhya and Yoga schools of philosophy, on the other.

APOLOGY FOR THE PRESENT COMMENTARY

For many years past some friends have pressed me, and tried to prevail upon me, to write a detailed commentary on the Gītā according to my own ideas. Already there exist a number of glosses, commentaries and expositions on the Gītā by revered Ācāryas or world-teachers, saints and holy men, as well as by savants possessing deep

insight into the Śastras. They are all worthy of respectful consideration, and have attempted to bring to light the secrets of the Gītā according to their own respective standpoints. But most of them are in Sanskrit and are particularly useful to men of learning. Therefore, the friends argued that a commentary should be written in a simple language, which may be of use to all, and may be comprehended by the common run of people, and which may contain a detailed exposition of the teachings of the Gītā. With this end in view, and believing that the writer himself would be benefited the most by such an undertaking, the work was taken in hand. But experience showed that the task was far more difficult than it appeared to be in the beginning.

I am conscious of the fact that from the points of view both of ability and qualification, this attempt on my part will be regarded as nothing short of a daring act. By caste I am a Vaiśya, and in point of learning and wisdom too I find myself wholly unequal to the undertaking. Thus I am altogether unqualified to write a commentary on a universally respected scripture like the Gītā. As regards the meaning of the Gītā, far from claiming a full understanding of the teachings of the Lord, it would be too presumptuous on my part to say that I have understood even a hundredth part of their import. And having grasped their meaning even to a small degree it is all the more difficult to translate them into practice. Those alone who are specially favoured by the Lord can undertake to do so. Practice in life of all those teachings in their entirety is indeed a far cry; even they are really blessed, who have moulded their lives according to a stray verse of the Gītā dealing with spiritual practice; and I bow crores of times at their sacred feet. Such persons alone possess the requisite qualification to interpret the Gītā.

Thus, from all points of view, the present attempt on my part is a daring enterprise and sheer childishness. Nevertheless, it has provided me an opportunity to devote some thought to the meaning of the Gītā, to reflect on the divine teachings of the Lord and to discuss spiritual topics and these moments of my life have been spent in the best way possible, for which I consider myself blessed. This has no doubt contributed to advance my knowledge of the Gītā and has also served to correct many errors; nonetheless, it may be safely presumed that I have erred at every step in the course of this undertaking. For whether I have understood even a hundredth part of the teaching of the Gītā cannot be definitely said. The real import of the Gītā is known in its entirety only to the Lord Himself, and to a certain extent to Arjuna, for whom the Gītā was intended. Or, even those who have actually realized God, and have fully actualized in life the grace of God, may partially know it. What more can I say on this subject ? I, for my part, am deeply obliged and indebted to all those revered souls who have written glosses and commentaries on the Gītā; for in shaping the present commentary, I have taken great help from a number of those glosses and commentaries. Therefore, with a heart full of gratitude, I offer, again and again, my humble salutations to those adorable souls.

With regard to this commentary, of course, I can unhesitatingly say that it is full of imperfections. Far from correctly interpreting the intention of the Lord, I may have misconstrued it myself at several places, and in many places I may have represented

the very reverse of what the Lord intended to say. For all these errors, I apologize with folded hands both to the merciful Lord and to all lovers of the Gītā. Whatever I have written, I have written according to my own poor lights; and I hope men of learning and wisdom will pardon me for the childishness I have exhibited through this indication of my poor understanding. In the present commentary, I have neither referred to the views of any Ācārya or commentator, nor criticized any. But while stating my own point of view, I may have said something which may conflict with the views of any, for which I seek forgiveness from all. It has not been my object to enter into controversy, or compare one point of view with another.

As far as possible, care has been taken to avoid inconsistency between what has gone before and what follows; but inasmuch as the commentary has assumed unwieldy proportions, it is not unlikely that mistakes of this type may have escaped notice. I humbly hope that the generous reader will kindly rectify all such errors and inform me about the same.

In writing this commentary, I received invaluable help from several revered personages, friends and relatives. Modern etiquette demands that I should mention them all by name. But if I proceed to do so, I would be hurting their feelings in the first instance; and secondly my relations with them are of such an intimate nature that any praise offered to them is as good as self-praise. Therefore, without mentioning any of them by name, I consider it enough to say that but for their ungrudging co-operation the commentary would not perhaps have seen the light of the day as it is.

— Jayadayal Goyandaka

ॐ

Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā

Contents

Chapter III

Chapter IV

Chapter V

Chapter VIII

Chapter IX

Chapter X

Chapter XIII

Chapter XIV

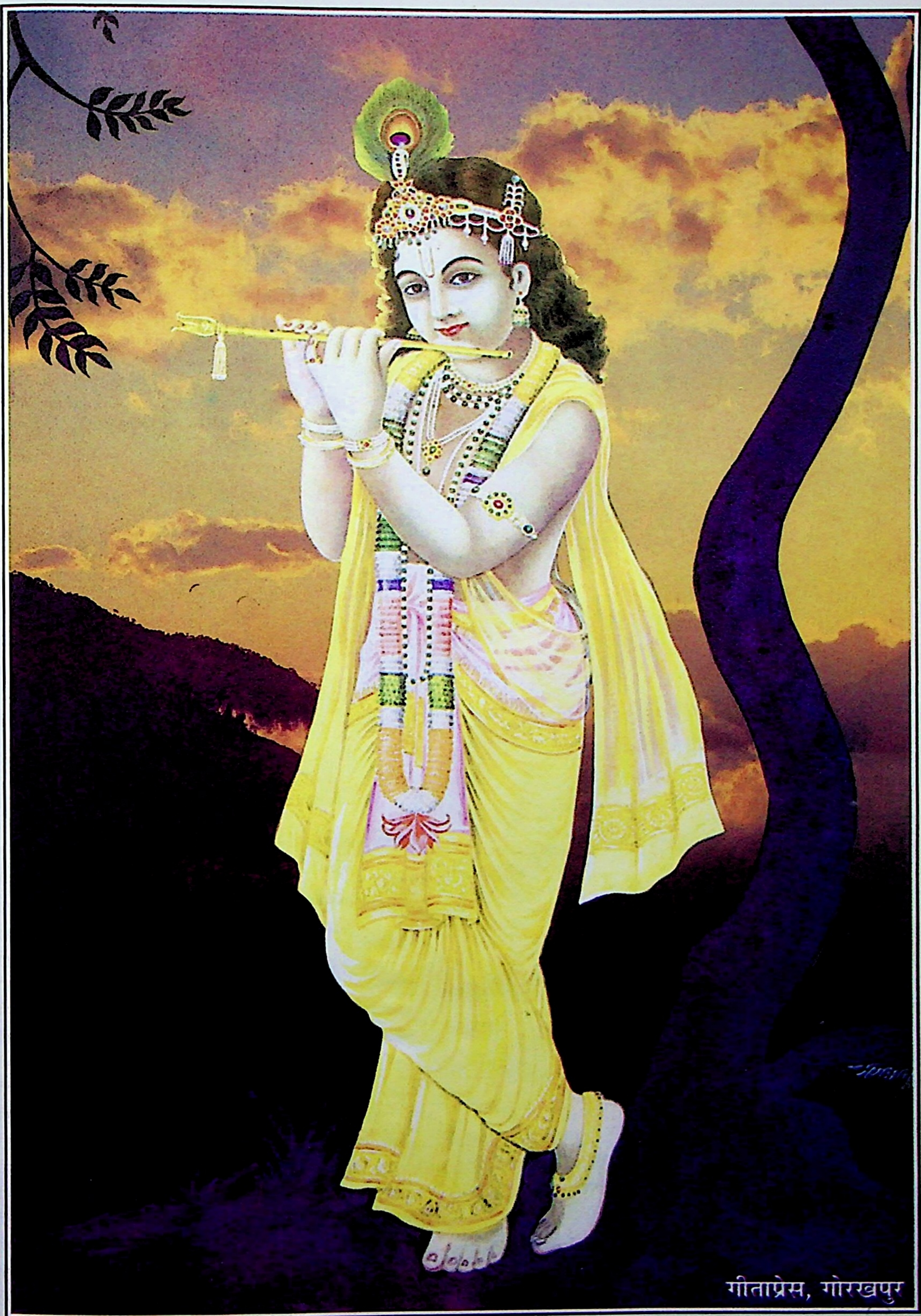
Chapter XV

Chapter XVI

Chapter XVII

Chapter XVIII


गीता



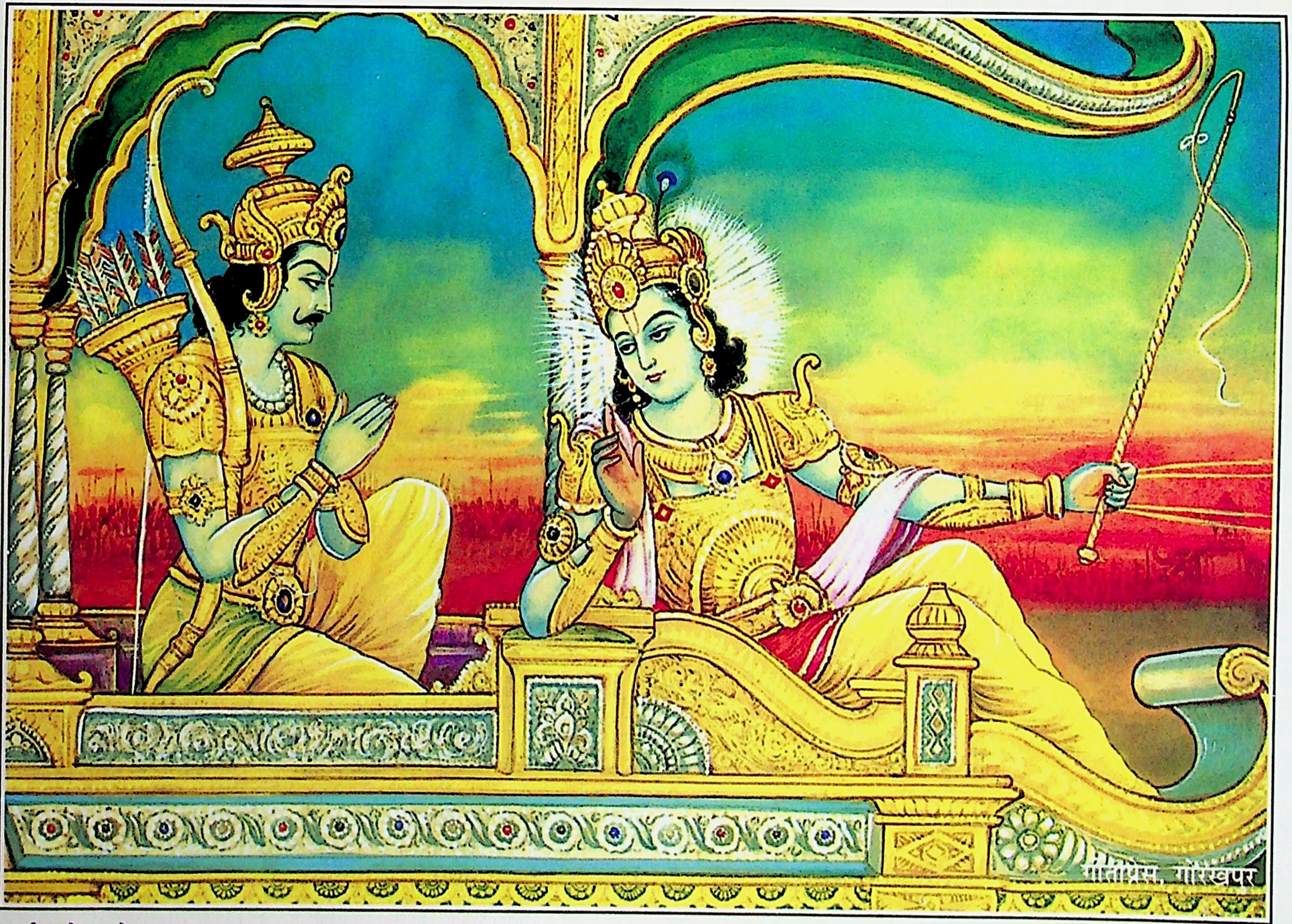
कृपासिन्धु भगवान् श्रीकृष्ण

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of grace



धृतराष्ट्र-सञ्जय

Dhṛtarāṣtra and Sañjaya



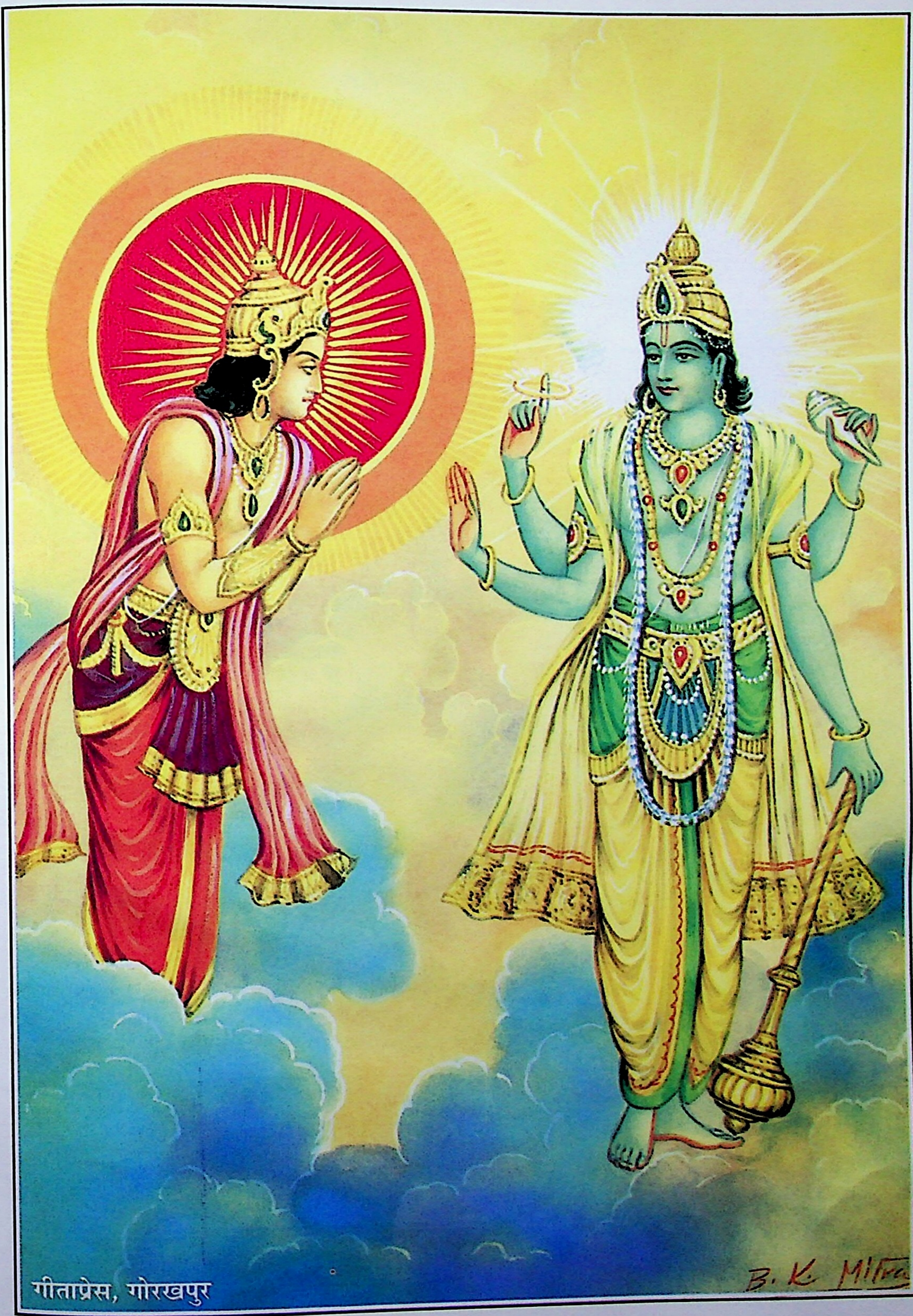
अर्जुनको उपदेश

Prescript to Arjuna



प्रजापतिकी शिक्षा

Preachings of Prajāpati



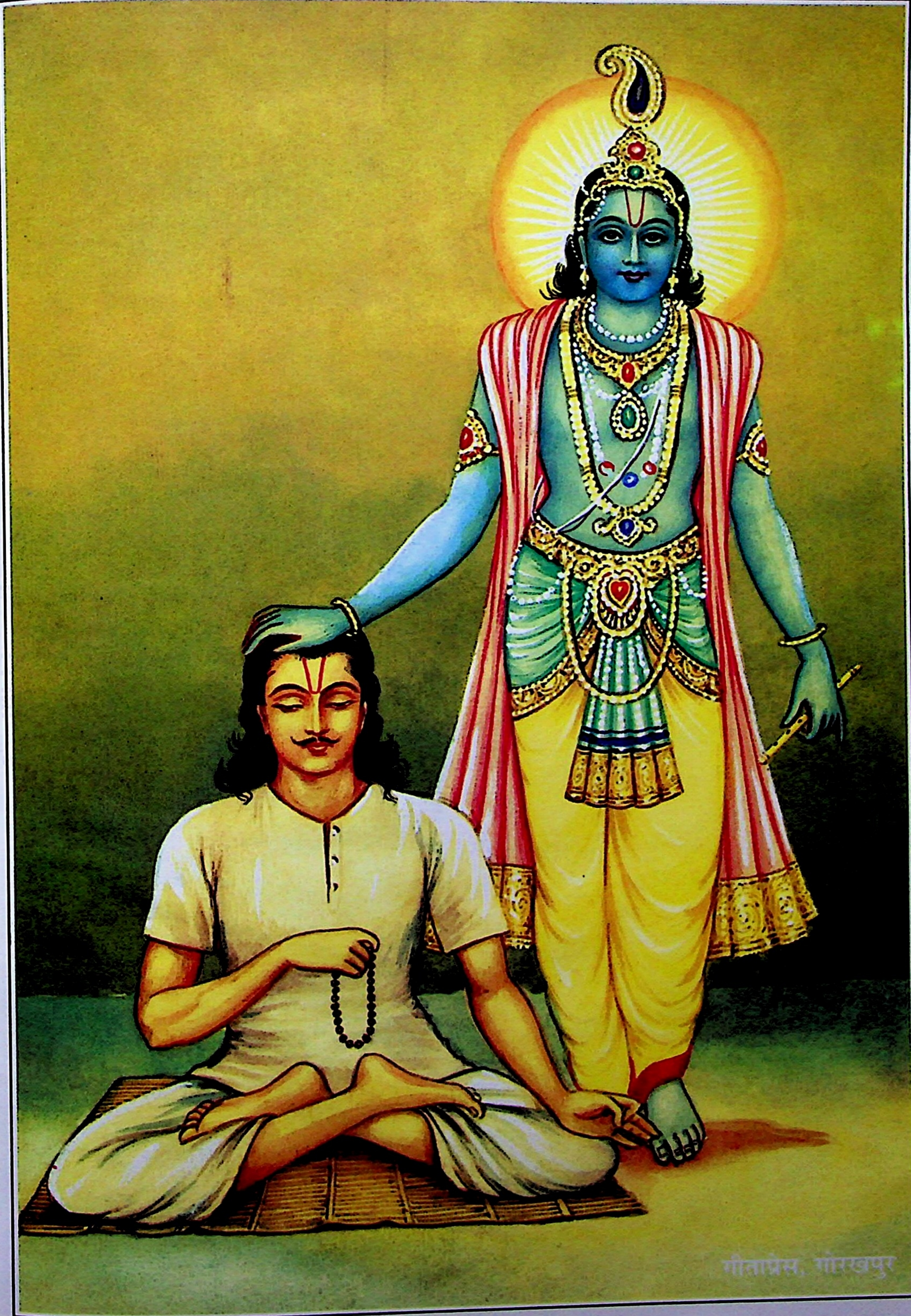
सूर्यको उपदेश

Precept of Sun



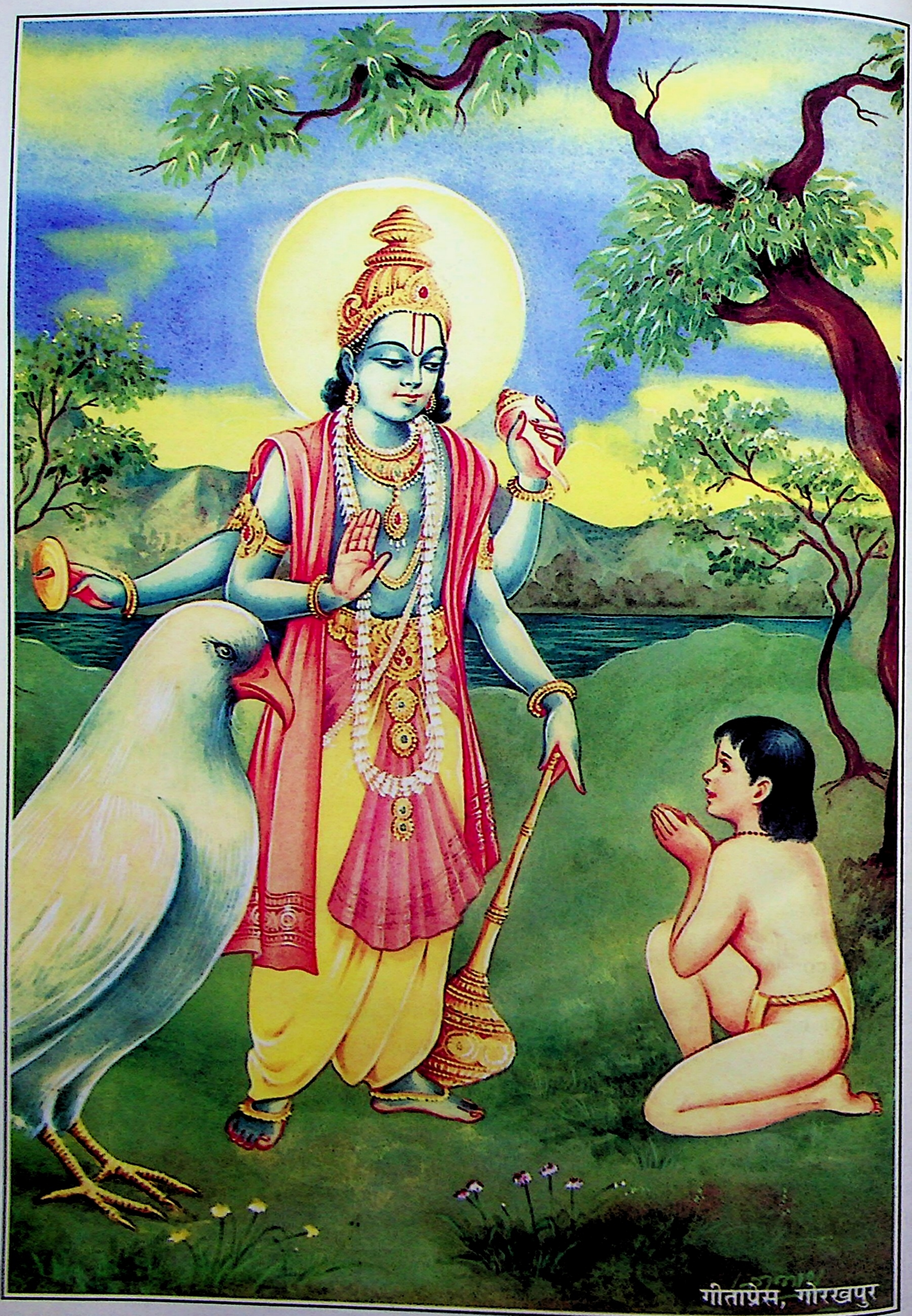
समदर्शिता

Impartiality



अनन्य चिन्तनका फल

Undivided devotion fructified



ध्रुवपर अनुग्रह

Shower of grace of Dhruva

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter I

Title of the Chapter

The present chapter is the Introduction to the great teachings delivered to the entire world by God Himself in the form of the *Gītā* making Arjuna the immediate cause for its delivery. After a recital of the principal warriors on both sides, it mainly describes Arjuna's dejection, caused by faint-heartedness, from the fear of loss of friends and relatives in the course of the impending clash of arms. And such a feeling of dejection helps one's spiritual advancement by inducing aversion to worldly enjoyments if one comes in touch with an advanced Soul. That is why the chapter has been given the title of "The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna".

Summary of the Chapter

In the first verse of this chapter Dhṛtarāṣṭra interrogates Sañjaya about the details of the war. Thereupon Sañjaya describes in the second verse how, approaching Droṇācārya, Duryodhana starts his conversation. In the third verse Duryodhana invites Droṇācārya to observe the mighty army of the Pāṇḍavas and devotes verses 4 to 6 to a recital of the names of the prominent warriors on the Pāṇḍava side. In the seventh, asking Droṇācārya to know carefully the main warriors and generals of his own army, he gives in verses 8 and 9 the names of some of them and describes their heroism and skill in warfare. In the tenth verse declaring his own army as unconquerable, and that of the Pāṇḍavas as comparatively weaker, in the eleventh he requests all his warriors to guard Bhīṣma on all sides. The twelfth verse speaks of Bhīṣma blowing his conch and the thirteenth describes the noise produced by the sudden blaring forth of conchs, kettledrums, drums and trumpets, etc., in the Kaurava army. Fourteenth to eighteenth verses speak of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, Bhīma, Yudhiṣṭhira, Nakula, Sahadeva and all other distinguished warriors of the Pāṇḍava army blowing their respective conchs and verse 19 tells us of the terrible sound echoing through heaven and earth and rending the heart of Duryodhana and his followers. Seeing the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra arrayed for battle Arjuna requests Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in verses 20 and 21, to place the chariot between the two armies, and in verses 22 and 23 he says that the chariot should be kept there till he has carefully observed and scanned the warriors assembled for the fight. Verses 24 and 25 describe how placing the chariot between the two armies, as desired by Arjuna, Śrī Kṛṣṇa invites the latter to behold the warriors assembled for the fight. Then, up to verse 30 there is a description, first by Sañjaya and then by Arjuna himself, of the latter's perplexity and grief at the sight of his relations in battle-array. In verse 31 Arjuna points out the evil consequences of war and verses 32 and 33 are devoted to his reasons for not coveting either victory or the pleasures attending sovereignty. In verses 34 and 35 Arjuna mentions his close relationship with the warriors, viz., their being his teachers, uncles, etc., and declares that he did not want to kill them, though he might be killed by them, or even for the sovereignty of the three worlds. Saying so, he proceeds in verses

36 and 37 to say that even though Duryodhana and his brothers were desperadoes, their killing would result only in sin and happiness could never be expected from it. In verses 38 and 39 he points out why the Pāṇḍavas should desist from the sin of destruction of their own race and enmity towards friends, and devotes verses 40 to 44 to a detailed enumeration of the evils resulting from the destruction of a family and its traditions. In verses 45 and 46 Arjuna says that the preparation for war with a view to killing his own relations due to lust for throne and enjoyment was nothing but preparation for the commission of a great sin, and expressing regret for it he declared that it was better that the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra should kill him. The chapter is concluded with verse 47, wherein Sañjaya describes how having determined not to fight, and agitated by grief, Arjuna laid down his arms, and sank into his chariot.

Link of the Story

The pomp and wealth of the Pāṇḍavas displayed during the performance of the Rājasūya sacrifice aroused deep jealousy in the mind of Duryodhana, who in combination with Śakuni, etc., invited Yudhiṣṭhira to a game of dice, in which Yudhiṣṭhira was fraudulently defeated and deprived of all his wealth and possessions. Finally, it was settled that Yudhiṣṭhira and the other Pāṇḍavas, together with Draupadī, should repair to the forest and live there in exile for twelve years; after this for one year they were to remain incognito, untraced by the Kauravas. All these thirteen years the kingdom was to be ruled by Duryodhana, and if the Pāṇḍavas remained undetected during the stipulated period of one year's incognito existence, the kingdom was to be returned to them after the conclusion of thirteen years. Having successfully concluded their exile of thirteen years according to these terms when the Pāṇḍavas at last asked for the return of their kingdom, Duryodhana gave a flat refusal. The learned and aged family priest of Drupada was sent to Duryodhana's court to negotiate in favour of the Pāṇḍavas, but Duryodhana remained adamant. Thereafter both the sides began to prepare themselves for war. Duryodhana went to Dvārakā to invite Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to join him as an ally. Arjuna also reached there the very same day. They both found Śrī Kṛṣṇa resting on a couch in His palace. Observing that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was asleep, Duryodhana went in and occupied a nice and comfortable seat placed at the head of the couch, while Arjuna remained standing near the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa joining both his palms in a posture of humility. The moment Śrī Kṛṣṇa opened His eyes He saw Arjuna standing before Him, and then, when He turned His head, He could observe Duryodhana seated on the chair at the head of the couch. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa welcomed both of them, and asked for the reasons of their visit. In reply Duryodhana said, "Your love and affection for me as well as Arjuna are quite balanced, and both of us are your relations; but I was the first to approach you. The code of honour among honourable men demands that help should be rendered to the first seeker of help. You are the greatest and most honourable person in the world today; therefore, you should render help to me alone." The Lord said, "I agree that you were the first to come here; but My eyes fell on Arjuna first. Therefore, I shall help both of you. According to the law of the scripture, the privilege of first choice should be given to the younger in age, therefore Arjuna's desire should be satisfied first. My help will be available in this war in two ways. One side will have My most powerful Nārāyaṇī-Senā, and on the other, I shall remain Myself, single-handed, bound by the vow of not participating in battle, and not taking up arms. Now, Arjuna, as righteousnes

dictates, I give you the first chance to express your desire; please take from out of those two whatever you prefer''. Arjuna thereupon chose Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of foes, and a manifestation of Nārāyaṇa Himself, as his helper. Duryodhana, for his part, took the powerful Nārāyaṇī-Senā as his share, and returned to Hastināpura very much delighted at heart.

Then, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa asked Arjuna why, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa would not participate in battle as a warrior, Arjuna gave up preference for the Nārāyaṇī-Senā and took Śrī Kṛṣṇa on his side Arjuna replied, ''Lord ! You are capable of destroying all those forces single-handed; why should I, in that case, care for the army ? Besides, I have for a long time cherished the desire in my heart that you should act as my Charioteer. Kindly fulfil that desire of mine during this great war''. The Lord, who is ever the most devoted lover of His devotees, accepted with pleasure this role of driving the horses of Arjuna's chariot, as desired by Arjuna. That is how Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa became the charioteer of Arjuna, and at the commencement of the battle of Kurukṣetra delivered to Arjuna the divine teachings as incorporated in the Gītā.

On the return of Duryodhana and Arjuna from Dvārakā, when the armies on both sides had assembled, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself went to Hastināpura as the emissarry of the Pāṇḍavas, and tried to prevail upon Duryodhana to prevent the war; but Duryodhana declared in clear and explicit terms. ''So long as I am alive, the Pāṇḍavas can never expect to have the kingdom. I am not prepared to give them even as much land as can be covered by the point of a needle.'' (Mahābhārata, Udyoga-Parva, Chap. 127, verses 22 to 25). It is only then that according to the advice of their mother, Kuntī, and under the inspiration of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas finally decided to involve themselves in war, considering their cause to be righteous, and establish by force of arms their rightful claim to the kingdom.

When both the sides had thoroughly prepared to start the battle, the sage Vedavyāsa approached Dhṛtarāṣṭra and said, ''If you want to see this terrible carnage with your own eyes, I can make you a gift of transcendent vision.'' But Dhṛtarāṣṭra replied: ''O chief of Brahmarṣis, I have no desire to see with my own eyes this slaughter of my own family, but I should like to hear all the details of the battle''. Thereupon the great sage Vedavyāsa conferred the gift of divine vision on Sañjaya (Dhṛtarāṣṭra's trusty counsellor) and said to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, "Sañjaya will describe to you all the incidents of the war". Whatever happens in the course of this war, he will directly see, hear and otherwise come to know. Whether an incident takes place before his eyes or behind his back, during the daytime or at night, privately or in public, and whether it is reduced to actual action or appears only as a thought, it will not remain hidden from his view. He will come to know every thing exactly as it happens. No weapon will touch his body, nor will he feel the least exhaustion.

''What is taking place is inevitable; there is no power on earth capable of arresting the course of this catastrophe. It will end in the triumph of righteousness and virtue.''

On Maharṣi Vedavyāsa's departure from the royal court, Sañjaya in answer to Dhṛtarāṣṭra's query described to him the location of the different Dvīpas (divisions) of the terrestrial world in the course of which he gave a geographical description of Bhāratavarṣa (India) as well. In the meanwhile, the struggle between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas started and continued for ten days, when the great Bhīṣma was thrown down

from his chariot and lay on his bed of arrows. At this point Sañjaya, again, goes to Dhṛtarāṣṭra and suddenly announces to him the fall of Bhīṣma in battle (Bhīṣma-Parva, Chap. 13). Terribly moved at the sad news, Dhṛtarāṣṭra requested Sañjaya to describe to him all the incidents of the conflict. Thereupon Sañjaya gave a detailed description of the formation of the two rival armies. Then, Dhṛtarāṣṭra again asked Sañjaya to recite to him in greater detail all the incidents that had taken place from the beginning of the battle till then. Here commences the first chapter of the Gītā. It constitutes the twenty-fifth chapter of Bhīṣma-Parva of the Mahābhārata. It starts with Dhṛtarāṣṭra interrogation to Sañjaya in the following terms:—

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय॥ १॥

धृतराष्ट्रः Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the blind king of Hastināpura; **उवाच** Said; **सञ्जय** O Sañjaya; **धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे** on the sacred soil of Kurukṣetra; **समवेताः** gathered; **युयुत्सवः** eager to fight; **मामकाः** my own sons; **च** and; **एव** indeed; **पाण्डवाः** the sons of Pāṇḍu; **किम्** what; **अकुर्वत** did.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: Sañjaya, gathered on the sacred soil of Kurukṣetra, eager to fight, what did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do ? (1)

Chapter 83 of *Vanaparva*, and Chapter 53 of *Śalyaparva*, of the *Mahābhārata*, contain detailed disquisitions on the sacredness of Kurukṣetra. It has been described as bounded by the river Sarasvatī in the north, and the river Dṛṣadvatī in the south. It is said that the length and breadth of the area were five Yojanas each, corresponding to forty miles on each side. The present geographical position of the place is south of Ambala in Haryana and north of Delhi. A small town, named Kurukṣetra, is even now situated at the place. There is another name, Samantapañcaka, by which the locality is designated. The *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* and other sacred books mention it as the place where celestials like Agni, Indra and Brahmā performed their austerities. King Kuru also performed severe austerities at this very place. Those who die here go to the higher regions after death. For these and similar other reasons 'Kurukṣetra' is called a Dharma-Kṣetra, or Puṇya-Kṣetra a 'holy tract'.

By the word 'Māmakāḥ, (my sons) Dhṛtarāṣṭra refers to his hundred sons and all the warriors on his side. And by the word 'Pāṇḍavāḥ' (the sons of Pāṇḍu), he means the five Pāṇḍava brothers, Yudhiṣṭhira and others, and all the warriors on their side. The interrogation in the verse shows Dhṛtarāṣṭra's desire to know in detail the account of the terrible fight which had raged for ten days previous to this,—how the assembled fighters started the battle, who was matched with whom in the fighting array, and who was killed by whom, on what date and by what means, etc.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra having already heard the news of the great Bhīṣma's fall in battle, the interrogation cannot mean that he had remained wholly ignorant of the battle, and therefore wanted to know whether the sanctity of the 'holy land' or Kurukṣetra had reformed the mind of his sons, inducing them to make peace with the Pāṇḍavas by conceding to the latter their right to their kingdom, or whether the righteous King Yudhiṣṭhira himself, being influenced by the

holiness of the tract, had walked out of the fight, or whether both the armies had, till then, remained arrayed in battle in their respective positions, and no fight had yet taken place, or, if there had been a fight, what was its result, etc.

In answer to Dhṛtarāṣṭra's query, Sañjaya says:—

सञ्जय उवाच

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा।
आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत्॥ २॥

सञ्जयः Sañjaya; **उवाच** said; **तदा** at that time; **राजा** king; **दुर्योधनः** Duryodhana; **व्यूढम्** drawn up for battle; **पाण्डवानीकम्** the army of the Pāṇḍavas; **दृष्ट्वा** seeing; **तु** and; **आचार्यम्** the preceptor (Droṇa); **उपसङ्गम्य** approaching; **वचनम्** (these) words; **अब्रवीत्** spoke.

Sañjaya said: At that time, seeing the army of the Pāṇḍavas drawn up for battle and approaching Droṇācārya King Duryodhana spoke these words: (2)

Sañjaya refers to Duryodhana as 'Rājā', or King. The following may be the reasons for it:—

(a) Duryodhana was an eminent hero and a great statesman and was actually running the whole Government.

(b) It is the nature of saints to show respect to all, and Sañjaya was a man of saintly character.

(c) An epithet of respect applied to the son would bring pleasure to Dhṛtarāṣṭra's heart.

The Pāṇḍava army had been arrayed in such a peculiar manner that its very sight startled Duryodhana, and in an anxious mood he hastened himself to inform Droṇācārya about it. His idea was that after an examination of the formation of the Pāṇḍava army, the great Teacher of Military Science, Droṇa, would advise Bhīṣma, the Chief Commander, to form a battle-array which would be better and more impregnable than that of the Pāṇḍava army.

Though the grand old man Bhīṣma was the Chief Commander of the Kaurava army, the position which Guru Droṇācārya, held in that army was also very high and responsible. In an army the position allotted to a commander must be maintained by him; he cannot quit his position without throwing the army into disorder. Therefore, though exercising the authority of the King, Duryodhana considered it better to go to Droṇācārya himself, rather than summon the Ācārya to him and thus remove him from his allotted place in the army. Over and above this, Droṇācārya was old in age and advanced in knowledge, and being the Teacher of the Kurus was worthy of respect and honour. Again, Duryodhana had to use the Ācārya as an instrument for serving his own selfish end, for this as well it was desirable to secure to goodwill of the Ācārya by proper exhibition of honour. From the spiritual point of view, it is one's duty to show humility and respect to one's conduct towards every other being; nay, in politics as well, a shrewd and clever man in order to get his purpose served shows respect to others. From all these points of view, it was but meet and proper for Duryodhana to go to Droṇācārya himself.

Approaching Droṇācārya, what Duryodhana said is stated below:—

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम्।
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता॥ ३॥

आचार्य master; तव धीमता शिष्येण द्रुपदपुत्रेण by your talented pupil Dhṛṣṭadyumna (son of Drupada); व्यूढाम् arrayed for battle; पाण्डुपुत्राणाम् of the sons of Pāṇḍu; एताम् yonder; महतीम् mighty; चमूम् army; पश्य behold.

Behold, Master, the mighty army of the sons of Pāṇḍu arrayed for battle by your talented pupil, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, son of Drupada. (3)

As a diplomat, Duryodhana was exceptionally clever. In order to excite Droṇācārya by rousing his revengeful spirit against Dhṛṣṭadyumna and ire against the Pāṇḍavas, he referred to Dhṛṣṭadyumna as Drupada's son and ''your talented pupil.'' By these words he reminded Droṇa of Drupada's ugly behaviour towards him in the long past, and then of his getting Dhṛṣṭadyumna as his son by the performance of a sacrifice with the unholy motive of killing Droṇa. By implication, he also said that Dhṛṣṭadyumna was so clever and the Ācārya so simple that though born to kill him, he had obtained from him instruction in the science and art of archery. And, then, how skilful and dexterous he was to array his army in such a way as to baffle his opponents ! It was such a person whom the Pāṇḍavas had made their Supreme Commander. It was now for the Ācārya to consider what should be his duty.

The Kaurava army consisted of eleven Akṣauhiṇīs,* and the Pāṇḍava army only of seven. Though numerically smaller, the Pāṇḍava army appeared very huge because of its adoption of the military array known as 'Vajravyūha'. Besides, a smaller army might be more powerful than a larger, if its organization was better and more efficient than that of the larger army. That is why calling the army of the Pāṇḍavas 'a mighty army' Duryodhana attempted to draw the Ācārya's attention to it, and appealed to him to devise some means of getting the better of it.

Having thus pointed to the array of the Pāṇḍava army, Duryodhana now proceeds to mention in three verses the names of the principal warriors on the Pāṇḍava side:—

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि।
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः॥ ४॥
धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान्।
पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः॥ ५॥
युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान्।
सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः॥ ६॥

अत्र (There are) in this army; महेष्वासाः wielding mighty bows; युधि in military prowess; भीमार्जुनसमाः equal to Bhīma and Arjuna; शूराः heroes (such as); युयुधानः a name of Sātyaki;

* A mixed unit of army composed of 21,870 chariots, as many elephants, 65,610 horses, and 1,09,350 foot.

च and; विराटः Virāṭa; च and; महारथः the warrior chief; द्रुपदः Drupada; धृष्टकेतुः Dhṛṣṭaketu; चेकितानः Cekitāna; च and; वीर्यवान् valiant; काशिराजः the King of Kāśī (the modern Vārāṇasī); च and; पुरुजित् Purujit (lit., the conqueror of many); कुन्तिभोजः Kuntibhoja; च and; नरपुङ्गवः the best of men; शैब्यः Śaibya; च and; विक्रान्तः mighty; युधामन्युः Yudhāmanyu; च and; वीर्यवान् valiant; उत्तमौजाः Uttamaujā; (lit., one who possesses supreme strength); सौभद्रः the son of Subhadrā, Abhimanyu; च and; द्रौपदेयाः the (five) sons of Draupadī; सर्वे all (of them); एव indeed; महारथाः warrior chiefs.

There are in this army heroes wielding mighty bows and equal in military prowess to Bhīma and Arjuna,—Sātyaki and Virāṭa and the Mahārathī (warrior chief) Drupada; Dhṛṣṭaketu, Cekitāna and the valiant King of Kāśī, and Purujit, Kuntibhoja, and Śaibya, the best of men, and mighty Yudhāmanyu, and valiant Uttamaujā, Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadrā, and the five sons of Draupadī,—all of them Mahārathīs (warrior chiefs). (4,5,6)

The term 'Yudhi' in verse 4 cannot be interpreted as the substantive of 'Atra', as some are prone to take it; for the battle had not actually commenced till then. Besides, the Pāṇḍava army having been referred to in the immediately preceding verse, the term 'Atra' naturally refers to it, and no substantive is thus required to go with it. By connecting the word, 'Yudhi' with 'Bhīmārjunasamāḥ', it has been indicated that the famous warriors whose names follow equalled Bhīma and Arjuna merely in prowess and proficiency in the art of warfare.

The history and career of the warriors whose names appear in these verses are given below:—

Yuyudhāna was the other name of Sātyaki, who was Arjuna's disciple *(vide Mahābhārata, Udyoga-Parva,* Chapter 81, verses 5-8). He was the grand son of Śini, a Yādava Chief *(Mahābhārata, Droṇa-Parva,* Chapter 144, verses 17-19). He was very much attached to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and was a powerful warrior and an 'Atirathī', who could fight any number of warriors single-handed. Having survived the Mahābhārata War, he met with his death in the internecine feud that followed among the Yādavas. There was another Yādava warrior bearing the name of Yuyudhāna, who is mentioned in *Mahābhārata Udyoga-Parva,* Chapter 152, verse 6.

Virāṭa was the name of the virtuous king of the Matsyas. The Pāṇḍavas lived their life of one year's incognito existence under him. His daughter, Uttarā, was given in marriage to Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu. Virāṭa and his three sons, Uttara, Śveta and Śaṅkha, were killed in the Mahābhārata war.

Drupada was the son of King Pṛṣat of the Pāñcālas. King Pṛṣat and Sage Bharadvāja were great friends; therefore, Drupada passed a certain period of his early days in the hermitage of Sage Bharadvāja, where an intimacy was formed between him and Droṇa, the son of Sage Bharadvāja. On the demise of Pṛṣat, when Drupada had become king of the Pāñcālas, Droṇa went to see him on a certain occasion, and addressed him as a friend. But this was resented by Drupada, and Droṇa came away wounded at heart. Imparting the knowledge of archery both to the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, Droṇa realized the preceptor's fee by having Drupada vanquished in battle by Arjuna in repayment of the insult he had suffered at Drupada's hands, and appropriated half of the latter's kingdom. Vanquished in battle, Drupada re-established his friendship with Droṇa only

as a matter of show, nursing a grievance against him in the core of his heart. With the help of a couple of Brahmarṣis, named Yāja and Upayāja, he performed a sacrifice with the motive of obtaining a son who would kill Droṇa. From the altar of that sacrifice sprang up both Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Kṛṣṇā. It was this Kṛṣṇā who later on became known in history by the names of Draupadī and Yājñasenī, and whom the Pāṇḍavas married after winning her hand in an open trial of skill in archery. King Drupada was a great Kṣatriya hero and was counted as a Mahārathī. In the Mahābhārata War he was killed by Droṇa in an open fight *(Mahā., Droṇa.,* Ch. 136).

Dhṛṣṭaketu was the son of Śiśupāla, King of Cedi. He met his death at the hands of Droṇa in the Mahābhārata War *(Mahā., Droṇa.,* 125).

Cekitāna was a Yādava hero belonging to the clan of Vṛṣṇis *(Mahā., Bhīṣma.,* 84.20), a Mahārathī as a fighter and possessed of great prowess. He was one of the seven commanders of the seven Akṣauhiṇīs of the Pāṇḍava army *(Mahā., Udyoga.,* 151). He met his death at the hands of Duryodhana in the Mahābhārata War *(Mahā., Śalya.,* 12).

The King of Kāśī was also a great hero and a Mahārathī. His name cannot be clearly made out. In the *Udyoga-Parva*, Chapter 171, his names are given as Senāvindu and Krodhahantā. But in the Karṇa-Parva, Chapter 6, where his death is related, his name has been mentioned as Abhibhū. Purujit and Kuntibhoja were both brothers of Kuntī, and maternal uncles of Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers. Both of them met their end at the hands of Droṇācārya in the Mahābhārata War *(Mahā., Karṇa.,* 6.22,28).

Śaibya was the father-in-law of the righteous King Yudhiṣṭhira. His daughter Devikā was given in marriage to Yudhiṣṭhira *(Ādi-Parva,* 95). He was not only a hero and a powerful fighter, but was also great as a man of character. That is why he has been called "the best of men".

Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujā were two brothers, who were princes of the Pāñcāla territory *(Mahā., Droṇa.,* 130). In the formation of the battle array they were posted to guard the wheels of Arjuna's chariot *(Mahā., Bhīṣma.,* 15-19). They were both great fighters and heroes possessed of immense strength, therefore the two attributes 'mighty' and 'valiant' have been added to their names. They both met their death at the hands of Aśvatthāmā while asleep at night *(Mahā., Sauptika.,* 8.34,37).

Abhimanyu was Arjuna's son, born of Subhadrā, who was Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sister. He was married to Uttarā, the daughter of Virāṭa, King of the Matsyas. Abhimanyu received his training in archery from his father Arjuna, as well as from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eldest son Pradyumna, and was a fighter of uncommon merit. On a particular day in the course of the Mahābhārata War Droṇācārya had adopted the military formation of Cakravyūha, 'Array of the Wheel', of such exceptional strength that even the foremost Pāṇḍava warriors like Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Nakula, Sahadeva, Virāṭa, Drupada and Dhṛṣṭadyumna failed to enter it, being worsted by Jayadratha, who kept the gate. Arjuna was engaged in fighting elsewhere. On that day the young hero Abhimanyu broke into that military formation of the Kaurava army single-handed and gave an exhibition of his exceptional military prowess by killing innumerable fighters on the side of the enemy. But Droṇa, Kṛpācārya, Karṇa, Aśvatthāmā, Bṛhadbala and Kṛtavarmā—these six Mahārathīs of the Kaurava army, in contravention of the rules of war, surrounded the young hero, Abhimanyu, who even in that state despatched, single-handed, many a fighter to

his doom. In the end he was struck on the head with a club by Duḥśāsana's son, and this caused his death *(Mahā., Droṇa.,* 49.). King Parīkṣit was the son of Abhimanyu.

The names of the five sons of Draupadī were Prativindhya, Śrutasoma, Śrutakarmā, Śatānīka and Śrutasena, who were descended from the loins of Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīmasena, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva respectively *(Mahā., Ādi.,* 221.80-84). They were killed by Aśvatthāmā at dead of night *(Mahā., Sauptika.,* 8).

A great hero exceptionally well-versed in the scriptures and the science of arms, and capable of commanding ten thousand bowmen battling together is called a Mahārathī.* Separate and detailed description of the prowess of almost all the fighters whose names have been cited by Duryodhana in these verses can be found in the *Mahābhārata, Udyoga-Parva,* Chapters 169-172. There also they have been described as either Atirathīs or Mahārathīs. Over and above them, there were other Mahārathīs in the Pāṇḍava army, whose names appear in the above chapters of the *Mahābhārata*. The term ''Sarve'' in verse 6 should be interpreted to include them all.

After citing the names of the chief fighters in the Pāṇḍava army, Duryodhana now proceeds to request Ācārya Droṇa to know the principal warriors in his own army.

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम।
नायका मम सैन्यस्य सञ्ज्ञार्थं तान्ब्रवीमि ते॥ ७॥

द्विजोत्तम O best of Brāhmaṇas, (lit., the twice-born†); **अस्माकम्** on our side; **ये** who (are); **विशिष्टाः** (the) principal (warriors); **मम सैन्यस्य** of my army; **नायकाः** generals; **तान्** them; **तु** also; **निबोध** know; **ते सञ्ज्ञार्थम्** for your information; **तान्** them; **ब्रवीमि** I mention (below).

O best of Brāhmaṇas, know them also who are the principal warriors on our side,—the generals of my army. For your information, I mention them below:— (7)

The term 'Tu' in the text has been used in the sense of 'also': Applying it after 'Asmākam' (on our side), Duryodhana intends to say that not only in the Pāṇḍava army, but in his own army also, there were many great heroes and fighters.

The word 'Viśiṣṭāḥ, has been used to point out those who were supreme in his army in point of heroism, steadiness, strength, intellect, courage, prowess, energy and knowledge of arms. The verb 'Nibodha' brings out that there was no paucity of such heroes and fighters of exceptional merit in his own army, and he was citing the names of only a selected few among them for the special knowledge of the Ācārya, who was being requested to hear them.

Now, in two verses, Duryodhana proceeds to mention the names of the principal warriors on his side, and praise them and other heroes of his army.

भवान्भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिञ्जयः।
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च॥ ८॥

---

* एको दशसहस्राणि योधयेद्यस्तु धन्विनाम् । शस्त्रशास्त्रप्रवीणश्च महारथ इति स्मृतः॥

† Investiture with the sacred thread (उपनयन) is counted as a second birth among the high-class Hindus and hence they are known as the twice-born after they have undergone this sacred rite.

भवान् yourself; च and; भीष्मः Bhīṣma; च and; कर्णः Karṇa; च and; समितिञ्जयः (ever) victorious in battle; कृपः Kṛpa; च and; तथा so; एव even; अश्वत्थामा Aśvatthāmā; विकर्णः Vikarṇa; च and; सौमदत्तिः the son of Somadatta, Bhūriśravā.

"Yourself and Bhīṣma and Karṇa and Kṛpa, who is ever victorious in battle; and even so Aśvatthāmā, Vikarṇa and Bhūriśravā (the son of Somadatta)". (8)

Ācārya Droṇa was Maharṣi Bharadvāja's son. From Maharṣi Agnivesya and Śrī Paraśurāma he obtained knowledge of all forms of arms and missiles with their secrets. A thorough master of Vedas and Vedāṅgas (sciences helpful in the study of the Vedas)* and a great ascetic, he was an exceptionally bold Atirathī, possessed of very deep knowledge and experience of archery, and the use of other forms of weapons, and unrivalled skill in warfare. He was fully aware of the use of Brahmāstra, Āgneyāstra and other wonderful weapons of war. Whenever he joined a battle with all his strength, he was unconquerable. He was married to Kṛpī, the daughter of Maharṣi Śaradvān, and Aśvatthāmā was the fruit of this wedlock. He was a friend of King Drupada in his early days. On one occasion when approaching King Drupada he addressed the latter as his dear friend. Drupada, intoxicated with power, rudely hurled the reply to his face, "A powerful king like me can never be the friend of a poor beggar like you." This rebuke of King Drupada went deep into his heart; thereafter going to Hastināpura, he began to live under the shelter of his brother-in-law Kṛpācārya. There he came in touch with Bhīṣma, who appointed him as the teacher of the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava princes. On the conclusion of the training of these princes, Droṇa asked his pupils to pay him the preceptor's fee by bringing Drupada before him as a prisoner of war. His favourite pupil Arjuna succeeded in carrying out the behest of his teacher by vanquishing Drupada in battle, and brought him as a prisoner with all the ministers of his Court. Without inflicting any physical injury on him Droṇa released Drupada from his bondage, but deprived him of his territory lying north of the river Bhāgīrathī, which he appropriated for himself. In the Mahābhārata War, Droṇa carried on a fearful fight as the Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava forces for five days; but in the end hearing a false report about the death of his son he renounced his arms, and seated in the posture of Yoga entered into deep meditation on God. When his life-force left the mortal frame, his bright soul illumined the entire region of the sky with a brilliant light. At this stage Dhṛṣṭadyumna struck him with a sharp sword, which separated his head from the trunk.

In the foregoing verse, beginning it with the word "Yourself", Duryodhana first cited the name of Droṇa among the heroes on his side, so that Droṇa might be highly pleased with him and enter on the fight with all the strength and energy at his command. Moreover, as his teacher, Droṇa was worthy of the honour for Duryodhana, and it was reasonable from this point of view also to count him first among his warriors.

Bhīṣma was the eldest son of King Śāntanu. He was born of Bhāgīrathī (the spirit of the river Gaṅgā). He was an incarnation of the ninth Vasu, a celestial named 'Dyu' *(Mahā., Śānti.,* 50,26). His original name was Devavrata. While in the

* They are, 1. Vyākaraṇa (Grammar), 2. Chandas (Prosody), 3. Jyautiṣa (Astronomy), 4. Śikṣā (Phonetics), 5. Kalpas (the science of rituals), and 6. Nirukta (Etymology).

prime of youth, he took the vow of life-long celibacy and renunciation of all claim to the throne in order to facilitate his father's marriage with Satyavatī, in answer to the demand of Satyavatī's foster-father. Owing to the terrible nature of this vow, he became famous on earth as Bhīṣma (the terrible). For the sake of his father's happiness, he wholly abandoned without the least hesitation the happiness of possessing a wife and a kingdom, which are objects of great temptation to the generality of men in this world. Extremely delighted at this uncommon sacrifice of his, Bhīṣma's father Śāntanu gave him the boon that even Death would be powerless to kill him without his consent. A life-long celibate, the very embodiment of flaming energy, and a master of the scriptures and of the science of warfare, Bhīṣma was a great soul, possessed of infinite knowledge and heroism of the highest order and a strength of resolve unsurpassed in its firmness. All the great virtues like valour, renunciation, endurance, forgiveness, compassion, tranquillity, self-control, truthfulness, non-violence, contentment, equanimity, strength, righteousness, majestic bearing, humility, large-heartedness, popularity, straight-forwardness in speech, courage, continence, indifference to worldly attachments, knowledge, wisdom, devotion to parents, knowledge of the scriptures and devotion to the preceptor, etc., were found fully developed in him. Above all, his life was fully saturated with the spirit of devotion to God. He possessed full knowledge of the divinity of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and was an exclusive lover and faithful devotee of the Lord. In the Mahābhārata War, he had no equal in the field of battle. He made a promise to Duryodhana that though he would refrain from killing the five Pāṇḍavas, he would in course of the fight slaughter with his own hands ten thousand warriors every day *(Mahā., Udyoga.,* 156. 21). Holding the position of the Chief Commander of the Kaurava army, he carried on a fearful fight for ten days. Thereafter, lying on his bed of arrows he enlightened all by delivering to them his inexhaustible store of knowledge, and, when the sun started on its northern course, gave up the body of his own free will.

Karṇa was a son of Kuntī, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, begotten of the Sun-god when Kuntī was a young maiden. Putting him into a box, Kuntī had thrown him into the river; but fortunately this did not cause his death, and carried by the current of the river the box finally reached Hastināpura. There picked up by Adhiratha, a Sūta (charioteer) by caste, the child was taken to his home and was nursed and brought up by Rādhā, the wife of Adhiratha, and began to be recognized as their own child. Born with a natural gold armour and earrings, he was given the name of 'Vasuṣeṇa', Karṇa received his training in arms from Droṇācārya and Paraśurāma, and became a proficient and experienced master of the scriptures and of the science of arms. He was a match for Arjuna in the knowledge of arms and as a fighter in the field. Duryodhana crowned him as King of the Aṅgas (territory corresponding to modern Bhagalpur in Bihar). A bosom friend of Duryodhana, he devoted himself body and soul to the constant thought of Duryodhana's welfare. His devotion to Duryodhana was so deep and great that even though approached by mother Kuntī and Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, he refused to give up the cause of Duryodhana and join the Pāṇḍavas during the fight at Kurukṣetra. His charities were incomparable. A regular worshipper of the Sun-god, he used to give away with great pleasure whatever was asked of him, by whosoever it may be, at

the time of his worship. One day, in Arjuna's interest, Indra, the King of celestials, assumed the form of a Brāhmaṇa and begged him to make a gift of the natural armour and ear-rings attached to his body. With great delight, that very moment, Karṇa tore his armour and ear rings from the body and gave them away. In exchange for them, Indra gave him a missile, which was infallible in its effect when hurled against a fighter, and with the help of which Karṇa killed Bhīmasena's son, Ghaṭotkaca, during the War. After Droṇācārya's death, assuming the charge of the Kaurava army for two days as Chief Commander, he met his death in a fight with Arjuna.

Kṛpācārya is the son of Maharṣi Śaradvān of the family of Sage Gotama. He is an experienced master of the science of archery. He had a sister named Kṛpī. Having been brought up by King Śāntanu out of pity (Kṛpā), he got the name of Kṛpa, and his sister got the name of Kṛpī. A proficient scholar of the Vedas, he is a virtuous soul possessed of many good qualities and rectitude of conduct. Before the advent of Droṇācārya, he used to impart instruction in the science of archery to the Kaurava, Pāṇḍava and Yādava warriors. He remained alive even after the death of all the Kauravas, and it was he who imparted the knowledge of arms to King Parīkṣit. He is a great hero and a great expert in vanquishing an enemy; therefore the attribute of 'Samitiñjayaḥ', (ever victorious in battle) has been affixed to his name in the verse. He is said to be still alive.

Aśvatthāmā is the son of Ācārya Droṇa. A great expert in military science, and a great fighter and hero, he is counted as a Mahārathī. He also received his training in arms under his father Droṇācārya. He too is believed to be alive still.

Vikarṇa was one of the hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He was an extremely virtuous soul, a great hero and a Mahārathī. At the time of her persecution in the Kaurava Court when Draupadī asked the assembled people whether she had been actually lost to the Pāṇḍavas as a stake in the gamble, except Vidura there appeared none to open his lips against that persecution. At that critical moment, it was Vikarṇa alone who rose in the open Court and declared in scathing terms, upholding both justice and righteousness, that it was a great injustice not to answer Draupadī's question. He also said that in his opinion Draupadī had not been won by the Kauravas as a stake in the game *(Mahābhārata, Sabhā-Parva.* 63.18-25).

Bhūriśravā, the son of Somadatta, was the grandson of King Śāntanu's elder brother, Bāhlīka. He too was a virtuous soul, an expert in the art of warfare, a great hero and a Mahārathī. He performed many sacrifices giving away huge riches as sacrificial fees. He met his death at the hands of Sātyaki in the Mahābhārata War.

The two indeclinables 'Tathā' and 'Eva' used at the end of the verse, show that equally with Kṛpācārya, Aśvatthāmā, Vikarṇa and Bhūriśravā too were 'ever victorious in battle'.

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥ ९ ॥

च and; **अन्ये** other; **मदर्थे** for me; **त्यक्तजीविताः** who have staked (their) lives; **बहवः** many; **शूराः** (there are) heroes; **नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः** equipped with various weapons and missiles; **सर्वे** (and are) all; **युद्धविशारदाः** skilled in warfare.

And there are many other heroes, equipped with various weapons and missiles, who have staked their lives for me, all skilled in warfare. (9)

The names of Śalya, Bāhlīka, Bhagadatta, Kṛtavarmā, Jayadratha and other Mahārathīs do not appear in any verse going before; therefore pointing to them all in a general way in the present verse, Duryodhana intends to show that the names of heroes taken by him did not exhaust the list of the heroes on his side, but that besides them there were many other fighters who stood on his side, well-equipped with arms like sword, club, etc., which are wielded by the hand, and missiles like arrows, iron clubs, spears etc., who were Mahārathīs and very great experts in the art of warfare, and were ready to sacrifice their lives for him. He wanted to assure the Ācārya that all these warriors would fight for the victory of his side to the best of their ability and till their very last breath.

After praising the prowess of the great warriors on his side Duryodhana now proceeds to compare the two armies, and declares his own army as more powerful than, and superior to, that of the Pāṇḍavas.

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम्।
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम्॥ १०॥

भीष्माभिरक्षितम् fully protected by Bhīṣma; अस्माकम् of ours; तत् this; बलम् army; अपर्याप्तम् (is) unconquerable; तु while; भीमाभिरक्षितम् guarded in every way by Bhīma; एतेषाम् of theirs; इदम् that; बलम् army; पर्याप्तम् (is) easy to conquer.

This army of ours, fully protected by Bhīṣma, is unconquerable; while that army of theirs, guarded in every way by Bhīma, is easy to conquer. (10)

By declaring his army as protected by Bhīṣma and unconquerable, Duryodhana proves the superiority of his forces. The point he made was that the army collected by him was full of many renowned Generals or Mahārathīs, and it was under the protection of Bhīṣma, the greatest living hero and fighter of the world, who had frustrated even the great Paraśurāma in battle. From the numerical point of view as well, his army comprised four Akṣauhiṇīs more than the Pāṇḍava army. It was not possible, therefore, for anybody to vanquish such an army, which possessed more power than what was required for the purpose of vanquishing the Pāṇḍavas. In the *Mahābhārata, Udyogaparva* Chapter 55, Duryodhana similarly gives a description of his army to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, where also he mentions almost all those Mahārathīs by name, and declaring that the great Bhīṣma was its protector shows its invincibility. There he clearly says, "O King, I find the majority of fighters in the ranks of the enemy without any material qualities, and the majority of fighters in our ranks as possessed of these qualities and of great promise".*

Therefore, in his opinion there was no cause to fear defeat in the War. Similarly, in the *Bhīṣma-Parva*, where Duryodhana, again, gives a description of his army to Droṇācārya, he merely repeats the above verse of the Gītā *(Bhīṣma-Parva*, 51.6). In the verse which precedes it, he goes so far as to say, "All of you Mahārathīs possess the power to kill the Pāṇḍavas with their

* गुणहीनं परेषां च बहु पश्यामि भारत। गुणोदयं बहुगुणमात्मनश्च विशाम्पते॥

entire army single-handed; it should cause no wonder, then, if you kill them with your combined efforts.'*

From all these facts it is clear that the term 'Aparyāpta' in the above verse is used by Duryodhana to bring out the strength and greatness of his army. Wherever these verses have been uttered, as in the places referred to above, their intention is to give encouragement to the warriors on his side. The propriety of this interpretation is proved by the context in which the verse is uttered by Duryodhana in every case.

By declaring the Pāṇḍava army as guarded by Bhīma and 'Paryāpta' (easy to conquer), Duryodhana attempted to prove it to be a weaker and vulnerable army. The point he sought to make clear was that whereas Bhīṣma was the protector of the Kaurava army, there stood on the other side Bhīma, who though possessed of a strong body, could not stand comparison with Bhīṣma as a fighter. So far as mastery of the art of warfare, knowledge of arms and scriptures, and power of intellect were concerned, Bhīṣma was quite incomparable; whereas Bhīma was, if anything, an indifferent archer, and a man of dull intellect. Therefore, according to Duryodhana, the Pāṇḍava army was 'Paryāpta'—limited in power, and easy to be conquered by the Kauravas.

Thus declaring his army, protected by Bhīṣma, as unconquerable, Duryodhana now proceeds to exhort all his Generals, including Droṇācārya, to guard Bhīṣma from every direction.

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः।
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि॥ ११॥

च and (therefore); **सर्वेषु अयनेषु** on all fronts; **यथाभागम्** in (your) respective positions; **अवस्थिताः** stationed; **सर्वे** all; **एव** indeed; **भवन्तः** you; **हि** positively; **भीष्मम्** Bhīṣma; **एव** in particular; **अभिरक्षन्तु** protect on all sides.

Therefore, stationed in your respective positions on all fronts, do you all guard Bhīṣma in particular on all sides. (11)

The great warrior Bhīṣma possessed the power to protect himself: Duryodhana too knew this fact full well. But Bhīṣma had made an announcement that Drupada's son Śikhaṇḍī had taken birth as a female child and subsequently become a male through sex-transformation; but because he was born as a female, Bhīṣma still regarded him as a female, and would not face him in battle according to the canons of chivalry followed by a Kṣatriya fighter. That is why on a previous occasion also while reviewing the army, Duryodhana had cautioned Duḥśāsana and all other warriors by explaining this danger in detail (*Mahā., Bhīṣma* 15.14-20). Similarly, on the present occasion impelled by that lurking fear in his mind, Duryodhana exhorts all the principal generals in his army to maintain, with their utmost strength, their respective positions in the battle-array, taking exceptional care and precaution that Śikhaṇḍī might not get a loophole to come in front of Bhīṣma in the course of the battle. They should be alert to drive away Śikhaṇḍī by force of arms, the moment he made any such attempt. If Bhīṣma could be saved from

* एकैकशः समर्था हि यूयं सर्वे महारथाः। पाण्डुपुत्रान् रणे हन्तुं ससैन्यान् किमु संहताः॥

Śikhaṇḍī, there was nothing else for the Kauravas to fear; for it was quite easy for Bhīṣma to vanquish single-handed all the Mahārathīs in the Pāṇḍava army.

After the above account of how Duryodhana praised the principal warriors of his army, and more particularly his Chief Commander Bhīṣma, Sañjaya now proceeds to describe the subsequent events on the field of battle:-

तस्य सञ्जनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः।
सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान्॥ १२॥

कुरुवृद्धः the grand old man of the Kaurava race; प्रतापवान् glorious; पितामहः (their) grand-uncle (Bhīṣma); तस्य to him (Duryodhana); हर्षम् joy; सञ्जनयन् bringing; उच्चैः terribly; सिंहनादम् like a lion; विनद्य roaring; शङ्खम् (his) conch; दध्मौ blew.

The grand old man of the Kaurava race, their glorious grand-uncle Bhīṣma, cheering up Duryodhana, roared terribly like a lion and blew his conch. (12)

Next to Bāhlīka, Bhīṣma was the oldest member of the Kaurava race. He had the same degree of relationship with the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, and being the grand-uncle of both the branches, he was an object of reverence to both; that is why Sañjaya called him 'the grand old man' of the Kauravas, and grand-uncle. Though much advanced in age, he excelled even the foremost younger heroes in energy, strength, fitness and heroism; therefore, he has been described as 'glorious'. The grand old warrior noticed Duryodhana standing near Droṇācārya, some what startled and anxious at the sight of the Pāṇḍava array. He further noticed that suppressing his anxiety, Duryodhana had been praising the Kaurava army in order to encourage the fighters and had been exhorting Droṇa and the other Mahārathīs to protect Bhīṣma. Intending, therefore, to assure Duryodhana of his own great prowess, and delight Duryodhana's heart, and to proclaim, as Chief Commander, the commencement of the fight, Bhīṣma gave a loud roar like a lion, and blew his conch with great force.

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः।
सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत्॥ १३॥

ततः then; शङ्खाः conches; च and; भेर्यः kettledrums; च and; पणवानकगोमुखाः tabors, drums and trumpets; सहसा एव all at once; अभ्यहन्यन्त blared forth; स शब्दः (and) the noise; तुमुलः tumultuous; अभवत् was.

Then conches, kettledrums, tabors, drums and trumpets suddenly blared forth and the noise was tumultuous. (13)

When roaring like a lion and blowing his conch, Bhīṣma announced the commencement of the battle, all the regions were flooded with hope and encouragement, and suddenly in all sections of the army conches, trumpets and other instruments of martial music, belonging to the different commanders, were sounded. The sounding of these instruments at one and the same time produced terrible noise that echoed and re-echoed through the entire region of the sky.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra's query was: "After assembling for the fight, what did his own sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do ?" In answer to this, Sañjaya described up to this point the doings of the fighters on Dhṛtarāṣṭra's side. And now, in five verses, he proceeds to describe the doings of the Pāṇḍavas :—

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ।
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः॥ १४॥

ततः then; श्वेतैः हयैः युक्ते महति स्यन्दने in a glorious chariot drawn by white horses; स्थितौ seated; माधवः Śrī Kṛṣṇa (lit., Lord of Lakṣmī, the Goddess of Prosperity); च and; पाण्डवः the (celebrated) son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; एव also; दिव्यौ शङ्खौ (their) celestial conches; प्रदध्मतुः blew.

Then, seated in a glorious chariot drawn by white horses, Śrī Kṛṣṇa as well as Arjuna blew their celestial conches. (14)

Arjuna's chariot was very large and excellent in every way. Covered all over with a plate of gold, it looked exceptionally bright and beautiful, and was very strong in build. Flags decorated it on all sides with small tinkling bells attached to them. The wheels attached to it were large and strong. A high flag containing the emblems of the moon and stars glittered like lightning and Śrī Hanumān was posted on it. With regard to this flag Sañjaya's report to Duryodhana was that in height as well as in length it covered the distance of a Yojana (8 miles). Its colour was as variegated as the rainbow in a cloud. Though so large and widely extended, it was very light, and could not be held up by any obstruction. It passed easily through clusters of trees without ever being touched by them.

There were four celestial horses attached to this chariot, all white, very beautiful, well-decorated, well-trained, strong and nimble. These were taken from the hundred celestial horses received as a gift from the Gandharva king Citraratha. The peculiarity about these horses was that any number of them might be killed in action, and yet their total number would ever remain hundred and could not be reduced. Moreover, they could go anywhere on this earth and in heaven. This was also true of the chariot (*Mahā., Udyoga.*, 56), which was a gift made to Arjuna by the Fire-god as a mark of pleasure after the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest (*Mahā., Ādi.*, 225). Seated on this glorious chariot, when Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the great warrior Arjuna heard the tumultuous noise produced by the blowing of conches and sounding of drums and other instruments of martial music by the fighters of the Kaurava army including the great Bhīṣma, they too in order to announce the commencement of the fight, blew their respective conches. The conches belonging to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna were no ordinary conches; they were of an extraordinary type, brilliant to look at and most uncommon in character. This is why they have been called 'celestial conches'.

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः।
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः॥ १५॥

हृषीकेशः Śrī Kṛṣṇa; पाञ्चजन्यम् (His) Conch named Pāñcajanya; धनञ्जयः Arjuna; देवदत्तम् (his)

conch Devadatta; भीमकर्मा of terrible deeds; वृकोदरः Bhīma (the second son of Pāṇḍu); महाशङ्खम् (his) mighty conch; पौण्ड्रम् known as Pauṇḍra; दध्मौ blew.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa blew His Conch named Pāñcajanya; Arjuna, his own called Devadatta; while Bhīma of terrible deeds blew his mighty conch Pauṇḍra. (15)

'Hṛṣīka', means a sense, and the Lord (Controller or Propeller) of the senses is called 'Hṛṣīkeśa'*. The term also denotes a repository of joy, happiness and power accompanied with amenities of life.† The Lord is not only the controller of the senses, but a repository of joy, happiness and power accompanied with amenities of life. Therefore one of the names of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is 'Hṛṣīkeśa.' Having killed a demon, Pañcajana by name, who possessed the form of a conch, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa took him for His conch. That is why His Conch got the name of 'Pāñcajanya' (Harivaṁśa II. xxxiii.17).

x x x

At the time of the Rājasūya sacrifice, Arjuna conquered a large number of kingdoms and brought untold riches to the Pāṇḍava capital; that is how he got the epithet of 'Dhanañjaya'. And he obtained the conch named 'Devadatta' from Indra, the King of Heaven, when Arjuna went there to fight the Nivātakavacas and other demons (*Mahā., Vana.*, 174,5). The sound of this conch was so loud and terrible that it used to terrify the soldiers in the enemy's ranks.

x x x

The second Pāṇḍava, Bhīma, was a man possessing exceptional physical strength. His deeds used to be so terrible that they inspired terror in the heart of those who either saw, or heard of, them. That is how he came to be known as 'Bhīma, of terrible deeds'. He was a great eater and possessed extraordinary power to digest a large quantity of food; that is how he got the name of 'Vṛkodara'. He possessed a conch of very large size, whose sound reverberated to a long distance; hence it has been called a 'mighty conch.'

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः।
नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ॥ १६॥

कुन्तीपुत्रः (the eldest) son of Kuntī (aunt of Śrī Kṛṣṇa); राजा king; युधिष्ठिरः Yudhiṣṭhira (lit., steadfast in battle); अनन्तविजयम् (his) conch known by the name of Anantavijaya; नकुलः Nakul (the fourth son of Pāṇḍu); च and; सहदेवः Sahadeva (the fifth son of Pāṇḍu); सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ (their) conches Sughoṣa and Maṇipuṣpaka (respectively).

King Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Kuntī, blew his conch Anantavijaya; while Nakula and Sahadeva blew theirs, known as Sughoṣa and Maṇipuṣpaka respectively. (16)

Of the five sons of Pāṇḍu, Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Arjuna were born of his first wife Kuntī, and Nakula and Sahadeva, of Mādrī, the second wife. In the present verse, the names of Nakula and Sahadeva also appear; and in order to show that Yudhiṣṭhira, Nakula and Sahadeva were not sons of the same mother, Yudhiṣṭhira has been referred to in the verse as the 'son of Kuntī.' Though at the time of the War Yudhiṣṭhira possessed no kingdom, he had conquered all the kings at the time of the Rājasūya sacrifice, and

* हृषीकाणीन्द्रियाण्याहुस्तेषामीशो यतो भवान्। हृषीकेशस्ततो विष्णो ख्यातो देवेषु केशव॥ (*Harivaṁśa* 279.46)

† हर्षात् सुखात् सुखैश्वर्याद्धृषीकेशत्वमुच्यते॥ (*Mahābhārata, Udyoga.* 70.9)

assumed the position of the Emperor. Moreover, Sañjaya believed that after the War he would again assume sovereignty. Even at the time when Sañjaya spoke these words, all the marks of a king were present in Yudhiṣṭhira's body. These were the reasons why Sañjaya added the title of 'King' to Yudhiṣṭhira's name.

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः।
धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः॥१७॥
द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते।
सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान्दध्मुः पृथक्पृथक्॥१८॥

च and; परमेष्वासः (the) excellent archer; काश्यः (the) King of Kāśī (the modern Vārāṇasī); च and; महारथः (the) great car-warrior; शिखण्डी Śikhaṇḍī; च and; धृष्टद्युम्नः Dhṛṣṭadyumna; विराटः King Virāṭa; च and; अपराजितः invincible; सात्यकिः Sātyaki,; द्रुपदः King Drupada; च as well as; द्रौपदेयाः the five sons of Draupadī; च and; महाबाहुः mighty-armed; सौभद्रः (the) son of Subhadrā, Abhimanyu; सर्वशः all of these and from all sides; पृथिवीपते O lord of the earth; पृथक् पृथक् severally; शङ्खान् (their respective) conchs; दध्मुः blew.

And the excellent archer, the King of Kāśī, and Śikhaṇḍī the Mahārathī (great car-warrior), Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Virāṭa; and invincible Sātyaki, Drupada as well as the five sons of Draupadī, and the mighty-armed Abhimanyu, son of Subhadrā, all of them, O Lord of the earth, severally blew their respective conchs from all sides. (17-18)

Śikhaṇḍī and Dhṛṣṭadyumna both were sons of King Drupada. Śikhaṇḍī was the elder, and Dhṛṣṭadyumna the younger brother. In the beginning, King Drupada had no issue; he, therefore, resorted to the worship of Bhagavān Śiva with the motive of obtaining a successor. When Lord Śiva pleased with his worship asked Drupada to take a boon, King Drupada submitted his prayer for a child. Bhagavān Śiva said he would get a daughter; but Drupada replied that he sought a son, and not a daughter. Thereupon Bhagavān Śiva said that the girl would subsequently be transformed into a son. As the result of this boon, a daughter was born to King Drupada in course of time; but possessed as he was of full faith in the words of Bhagavān Śiva, he announced it as the birth of a son. The queen also took precaution to suppress the truth about the child's sex. The daughter was given a boy's name 'Śikhaṇḍī, and, dressed as a boy, was given all the requisite education and training of a Prince. In due time, that so-called 'Prince' was married to the daughter of Hiraṇyavarmā, king of the Daśārṇas. Coming to live with her husband the daughter of Hiraṇyavarmā discovered that Śikhaṇḍī was a woman, and sad at heart sent word to her father to that effect. King Hiraṇyavarmā got so enraged at the news that he immediately declared war on King Drupada, and made a resolve to avenge the wrong by taking Drupada's life. Desiring to avoid the fight, King Drupada took recourse to the worship of the Deity. And Śikhaṇḍī, for his part, terribly cast down at the unfortunate turn of events, quietly left the palace determined to put an end to his life in the forest. There he happened to meet a Yakṣa, Sthūṇākarṇa by name, possessed of supernatural power, who out of pity gave his manhood to Śikhaṇḍī for a stipulated period, accepting for himself Śikhaṇḍī's femininity in exchange. This is the story of how Śikhaṇḍī turned a man from a

woman. Returning thereafter to his kingdom, Śikhaṇḍī gave assurance to his parents that he was no longer a woman, and pacified his father-in-law, Hiraṇyavarmā, by furnishing proof of his manhood. By a curse of Kubera, Sthūṇākarṇa remained a woman all his life; therefore Śikhaṇḍī had not to return his manhood, and remained a man for the rest of his life, Bhīṣma was aware of this history of Śikhaṇḍī, and, therefore, always refused to strike him as an adversary. Śikhaṇḍī was a great hero and fighter, and a Mahārathī among warriors. Placing him in front as a screen, Arjuna struck at Bhīṣma on the last day of Bhīṣma's fight, and put an end to the career of that old warrior. The other heroes mentioned in these two verses have already been introduced to the reader.

x x x

By the use of the word 'Sarvasaḥ' in this verse, Sañjaya intends to convey that besides Śrī Kṛṣṇa the five Pāṇḍavas, the King of Kāśī and other heroes whose names are mentioned in the above verses, the other Rathīs, Mahārathīs and Atirathīs in the Pāṇḍava army also blew their respective conchs.

Having told how following the lead of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, all heroes and warriors of the Pāṇḍava army blew their conches from their respective positions, Sañjaya now proceeds to show the effect produced by that sound:—

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत्।
नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन्॥ १९॥

च and; सः that; तुमुलः terrible; घोषः sound; नभः heaven; च and; पृथिवीम् earth; एव as well; व्यनुनादयन् echoing through; धार्तराष्ट्राणाम् of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and those who sided with them; हृदयानि (the) hearts; व्यदारयत् rent.

And the terrible sound, echoing through heaven and earth, rent the hearts of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons. (19)

When the conches of all the heroes in the Pāṇḍava army were sounded all at a time, the sound produced by them was so voluminous, loud, deep and dreadful that it filled all the regions of heavan and earth. Widely spreading over those regions, it produced echoes, which resounded throughout the earth and sky and caused such a terror and fright in the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and the other fighters on their side that they felt a sudden oppression in their hearts as if they had been rent asunder.

After describing how the sound of conches blown by the Pāṇḍavas oppressed the hearts of the Kaurava heores, Sañjaya proceeds in the next four verses to quote the words which Arjuna, full of enthusiasm, addressed to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa:—

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः।
प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसम्पाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः॥ २०॥
हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते।

अर्जुन उवाच

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत॥ २१॥

महीपते O lord of the earth; अथ now; कपिध्वजः an epithet of Arjuna (lit., one who has a monkey seated on his banner); पाण्डवः (the celebrated) son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; व्यवस्थितान् arrayed (against him); धार्तराष्ट्रान् the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; दृष्ट्वा seeing; शस्त्रसम्पाते प्रवृत्ते when missiles were ready to be hurled; धनुः (his) bow; उद्यम्य taking up; तदा then; हृषीकेशम् to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; इदम् (the) following; वाक्यम् words; आह addressed; अच्युत O Kṛṣṇa; मे my; रथम् chariot; उभयोः सेनयोः of the two armies; मध्ये in the middle; स्थापय place.

Now, O lord of the earth, seeing your sons arrayed against him, and when missiles were ready to be hurled, Arjuna, son of Pāṇḍu, took up his bow and then addressed the following words to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; Kṛṣṇa, place my chariot between the two armies. **(20-21)**

In accordance with his promise to Bhīmasena *(Mahā., Vana.,* 151.17-18) the great hero Hanumān always occupied the huge flag of Arjuna, and from time to time, during the war, used to give loud and dreadful roars *(Mahā., Bhīṣma.,* 52.18). Sañjaya employs the attribute 'Kapidhvaja' for Arjuna, in this verse, to remind Dhṛtarāṣṭra of this fact.

Observing that Duryodhana and his brothers, and all other Kaurava warriors, in their full battle-uniform, were completely ready with their weapons to start the battle, the heroic sentiment was awakened in Arjuna's mind as well, and he immediately took up the Gāṇḍīva bow in his hand. This is what Sañjaya tries to convey by verse 20.

Referring, again, to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Hṛṣīkeśa' in verse 21 above, Sañjaya is pointing out to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra that God Himself, the Knower of all hearts, was acting as Arjuna's charioteer. Was it, therefore, not the height of ignorance and folly to expect victory in that fight in which Lord Himself was helping the other side ?

'Acyuta' means one who is never vanquished, or who never suffers a fall. The word also means he who ever remains established in his self, and is never dissociated from his power and glory. Addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa by this name, Arjuna reveals his knowledge about the glory and reality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In other words, Arjuna means to say that though engaged in the servile role of driving his chariot, He is nevertheless, and for ever, God Himself.

यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान्।
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन्रणसमुद्यमे ॥ २२ ॥

यावत् (and) till; अहम् I; योद्धुकामान् अवस्थितान् drawn up for battle; एतान् these (adversaries); निरीक्षे have carefully observed; अस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे in this fight; कैः सह with whom; मया योद्धव्यम् I have to engage.

And keep it there till I have carefully observed these warriors drawn up for battle, and have seen with whom I have to engage in this fight. **(22)**

Arjuna says to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa that taking the chariot between the two armies it should be placed at such a convenient point, and for such a length of time, that he could see and closely examine all the warriors arrayed for battle in their battle-dress. The object of his making this request was to know definitely who were the heroes on the other side with whom he would be required personally to come to grips in that dreadful business of War.

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः।
धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः॥ २३॥

युद्धे In (this) war; दुर्बुद्धेः धार्तराष्ट्रस्य of evil-minded Duryodhana (son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra); प्रियचिकीर्षवः well-wishers; ये एते whosoever; अत्र here, on this side; समागताः have assembled; योत्स्यमानान् ready to fight; अहम् I; अवेक्षे shall scan (them).

"I shall scan the well-wishers in this war of evil-minded Duryodhana, whoever have assembled on this side and are ready for the fight." (23)

It had been definitely stipulated that on the completion of thirteen years' exile, the kingdom of the Pāṇḍavas would be returned to them. These thirteen years the kingdom had remained under the control of the Kauravas only as a trust; but Duryodhana, with the evil intent of wrongfully appropriating the kingdom, denied this condition altogether. From the beginning of his career up till then Duryodhana had practised many forms of persecution against the Pāṇḍavas, but this last wrong action on his part became wholly intolerable. Remembering this evil intent of Duryodhana, Arjuna speaks of him in the verse as 'evil-minded'.

Arjuna's desire to scan the well-wishers of Duryodhana seems to indicate the thought that even though the wrongs and cruelties perpetrated by evilminded Duryodhana were well-known throughout the world, those kings had assembled to uphold his cause and help him in the fight. It proved that their mind and intellect had become as vitiated as that of Duryodhana. That is why they had gathered together to lend their support openly to his wrongs, and give him encouragement by the show of their pomp and power. Thus trying to advance Duryodhana's interest they were, in reality, doing him an injury. Arjuna, therefore, wanted to see with his own eyes who those fighters were, who regarding them to be great heroes in fight and eager to participate in it had taken their stand on the battle-field. There was the spirit of challenge in Arjuna's mind when he expressed this desire, and he wanted to teach them a lesson that it did not pay to take side with wrong and unrighteousness.

Sañjaya now proceeds to describe in two verses what Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa did on hearing the above request of Arjuna.

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम्॥ २४॥
भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम्।
उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान्समवेतान्कुरूनिति॥ २५॥

भारत O Dhṛtarāṣṭra (lit., a descendant of Bharata); गुडाकेशेन by Arjuna; एवम् thus; उक्तः addressed; हृषीकेशः Śrī Kṛṣṇa; उभयोः सेनयोः of the two armies; मध्ये in the middle; भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः in front of Bhiṣma and Droṇa; च and; सर्वेषाम् महीक्षिताम् (in front) of all the kings; रथोत्तमम् the magnificent chariot; स्थापयित्वा having placed; इति thus; उवाच said; पार्थ O (celebrated) son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; समवेतान् assembled; एतान् these; कुरून् Kauravas; पश्य behold.

Sañjaya said: O king, thus addressed by Arjuna, Śrī Kṛṣṇa placed the magnificent chariot between the two armies in front of Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all the kings and said, "Arjuna, behold these Kauravas assembled here. (24-25)

The word 'Guḍākā' means 'sleep' and a conqueror of sleep is called 'Guḍākeśa'. Arjuna had conquered his sleep; that is, he could carry on life's activities without taking rest in the form of sleep, and never felt oppressed by sleep. He was never overcome by lethargy. By mentioning him as 'Guḍākeśa', Sañjaya's intention was to point out to Dhṛtarāṣṭra that he could never expect his sons to overcome Arjuna, who was always so alert and circumspect.

By saying, "behold these Kauravas assembled here", Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa intimated that, in accordance with Arjuna's request that the chariot should be placed between the two armies and kept there till he had carefully observed all the warriors, He had brought the chariot between the two armies and had placed it at such a point that from there Arjuna could have a clear view of all the warriors. The chariot had been brought to a standstill, and Arjuna could observe the fighters as long as he liked.

The word 'Kauravas' in the sentence "behold these Kauravas", has a special significance. By this, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa intended to say that the fighters in that army were mostly members of Arjuna's own family, and his own kith and kin. It was an invitation to Arjuna to see those near and dear ones drawn up for battle. This covert suggestion from the Lord brought to light Arjuna's deep identification with, and attachment to his own family, which had up till now remained concealed within his heart. These words, as it were, acted as the seed from which sprung the faint-heartedness of Arjuna caused by compassion, the source of which was affection for blood relations. It appears that in order to scatter His blessings to the world, using Arjuna as His instrument, the Lord through the use of these words produced such a dejection in Arjuna's mind that he refused to participate in the fight, as the result of which there began to flow from the direct lips of God Himself the sweet and nectarean stream of words in the form of the divine *Gītā,* which sanctified the three worlds, and uplifted, and will continue, for an infinite period of time, to uplift the souls of an infinite number of beings.

Hearing the above words of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa what Arjuna did, is now being described by Sañjaya.

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितॄनथ पितामहान्।
आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातॄन्पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ॥ २६ ॥
श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि।

अथ now; पार्थः Arjuna; तत्र there; उभयोः अपि सेनयोः in both the armies; स्थितान् stationed; पितॄन् (his) uncles; पितामहान् grand-uncles (and even great grand-uncles); आचार्यान् teachers; मातुलान् maternal uncles; भ्रातॄन् brothers (and cousins); पुत्रान् sons (and nephews); पौत्रान् grand-nephews; तथा even so; सखीन् friends; श्वशुरान् fathers-in-law; च and; सुहृदः well-wishers; एव as well; अपश्यत् saw.

Now Arjuna saw stationed there in both the armies his uncles, grand-uncles and teachers, even great grand-uncles, maternal uncles, brothers and cousins, sons

and nephews, and grand-nephews, even so friends, fathers-in-law and well-wishers as well. (26, & first half of 27)

Hearing the above direction of the Lord, Arjuna lifted his eyes, and, looking up and down, scanned all his relations stationed in the two armies. There he observed posted in both the ranks, uncles like Bhūriśravā, and grand-uncles and great-grand-uncles, like Bhīṣma, Somadatta and Bāhlīka. There were teachers like Droṇācārya and Kṛpācārya. Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Śalya (Mādrī's brother) etc., were maternal uncles, Yudhiṣṭhira, Karṇa, etc., were his brothers, and Duryodhana, etc., his cousins. Abhimanyu, Prativindhya, Ghaṭotkaca and Lakṣmaṇa etc., were his sons, or sons of his brothers and cousins. The sons of Lakṣmaṇa, etc., were related to him as grand-nephews. Besides, there were many friends and playmates of early youth. Drupada, Śaibya, etc., were fathers-in-law. There were also many well-wishers in both the ranks, who came to participate in the fight only with the object of doing good to their respective sides, without any selfish motive.

Sañjaya now describes what Arjuna did after thus observing the warriors in the two armies.

तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्बन्धूनवस्थितान्॥ २७॥
कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत्।

अवस्थितान् present; तान् those; सर्वान् all; बन्धून् relations; समीक्ष्य seeing; सः the same; कौन्तेयः the son of Kuntī, Arjuna; परया कृपया with deep compassion; आविष्टः filled; विषीदन् sorrowing; इदम् these (words); अब्रवीत् uttered.

Seeing all those relations present there, Arjuna was filled with deep compassion, and uttered these words in sadness. (Second half of 27 and first half of 28). (28)

The preceding one and a half verses mentioned Arjuna's uncles, grand-uncles and many other relations, who stood in both the armies; but there were other relations of his among the fighters, the nature of whose relationship with him he did not clearly bring out, e.g., wife's brothers like Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Śikhaṇḍī and Suratha, etc., and sister's husbands like Jayadratha, etc., and other fighters related to him in other ways, who are all referred to by Sañjaya in this verse, when he says "all relations present there."

When Arjuna saw all those near and dear ones arrayed for battle, and thought that all of them would meet their inevitable doom in the impending holocaust, his heart gave way and he was suddenly overtaken by a sentiment which was the reverse of what a fighter should possess, a sneaky cowardliness born of excessive fellow-feeling and tenderness. This is mentioned in Sañjaya's words as "deep compassion" Under its influence Arjuna forgot his own inherent nature, the manliness of a Kṣatriya: that is why he has been referred to as "filled with compassion".

The word "Idam" meaning 'these words', used in this verse, refers to all the words uttered by Arjuna in verses beginning with the next and ending with verse 46 of this chapter.

In the next two and a half verses, Arjuna himself describes to what a miserable state he had been reduced by his excessively soft feelings for his relations :—

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम्॥ २८॥
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति।
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते॥ २९॥

कृष्ण O Kṛṣṇa; समुपस्थितम् arrayed; युयुत्सुम् longing for battle; इमम् स्वजनम् these kinsmen; दृष्ट्वा at the sight of; मम my; गात्राणि limbs; सीदन्ति give way; च and; मुखम् (my) mouth; परिशुष्यति is parching; च nay; मे शरीरे (runs) through my body; वेपथुः a shiver; च and; रोमहर्षः horripilation; जायते takes place.

Arjuna said: Kṛṣṇa, at the sight of these kinsmen arrayed for battle my limbs give way, and my mouth is parching; nay, a shiver runs through my body and hair stands upright. (2nd half of 28 and 29)

By the above words, Arjuna intends to show that the effect of indiscriminate slaughter of the fighters in the great War would be extremely terrible for both sides. He knew it as a matter of fact that the warriors present before his eyes, young and old,— dear uncles, cousins, relations and friends,—all would walk into the jaws of death. The realization of this fact, all at once, produced such a gripe in his heart,—such a deep fright and ignition in the mind,—that they produced their reaction on the body in the form of trembling of limbs, and hair standing upright.

गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते।
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः॥ ३०॥

हस्तात् from (my) hand; गाण्डीवम् the bow Gāṇḍīva; स्रंसते slips; च and; त्वक् (my) skin; एव too; परिदह्यते burns all over; च and; मे my; मनः mind; भ्रमति reels; इव as it were; च and (hence); अवस्थातुम् to stand; न शक्नोमि I am not (even) able.

The bow, Gāṇḍīva,* slips from my hand and my skin too burns all over; my brain is whirling, as it were, and I can stand no longer. (30)

It was an extremely deplorable and grievous state to which Arjuna was reduced by the softness of heart caused by his compassion. Describing it, he himself said that his limbs had become numb and wholly devoid of power; far from being able to string his bow, Gāṇḍīva and wield it, he could not even hold it in his hand, and

* The Gāṇḍīva bow possessed by Arjuna was a celestial weapon. It was of the size of a palm tree *(Vide Mahā., Udyoga.,* 161). Arjuna himself, disguised as the eunuch Bṛhannalā, gave a description of it to Prince Uttara in the following terms:— 'This is the world-renowned bow of Arjuna. It is plated all over with gold, is the best of all weapons and possesses the power of a hundred thousand weapons. It is with this bow that Arjuna has conquered gods and men. This wonderful, variegated, peculiar, delicate and gigantic bow was adored for a long time by gods, demons and Gandharvas (celestial musicians). This super-celestial bow was kept for a thousand years by Brahmā, for 503 years by Prajāpati, for 85 years by Indra, for 500 years by the moon-god and for a hundred years by Varuṇa (the god of waters)''. Arjuna got it from Varuṇa at the instance of the Fire-god who was pleased with him for his having offered the Khāṇḍava forest to the Fire-god for consumption *(Vide Mahā., Ādi.,* 225).

it seemed to him to be actually dropping out of his hand. The thought of the dreadful effect of the war had made his mind almost like a boiling cauldron, as the effect of which his very skin was burning; the mental agony had made his mind so restless that he could not fix it on anything even for a moment. His head was reeling, and he felt as if he would fall senseless to the ground.

Describing his state of dejection in the above words, Arjuna now proceeds to give his reasons against the War :—

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव।
न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे॥ ३१॥

च and; केशव O Kṛṣṇa (lit., the Supreme Deity); निमित्तानि the omens (also); विपरीतानि adverse; पश्यामि I see; न च nor; आहवे in battle; स्वजनम् my kith and kin; हत्वा in killing; श्रेयः (any) good; अनुपश्यामि I see.

And, Keśava, I see such omens of evil, nor do I see any good in killing my kinsmen in battle. (31)

Omens portend either good or evil. The word 'Nimittāni' in the present verse refers to such omens. An untimely eclipse, shaking of the earth and shooting of stars in the sky—all these inauspicious omens gave an indication to Arjuna's mind that the result of this War would not be happy. That is why he pointed out that, in his opinion, it appeared better not to engage in that fight.

When Arjuna said that he did not see any good in killing his kith and kin in battle, he meant that no form of good could be expected from such killing of near relations and friends. For, firstly, doing to death of relations by violence was bound to lead to repentence, which would ever after continue to corrode the mind. Secondly, in their absence life would be quite miserable. And, thirdly, sin would accrue from such killing. Thus it was beneficial neither from the point of view of this world, nor from that of the next. Therefore, Arjuna held that it was not at all advisable to start the War.

In the above verse, Arjuna said that there was no possibility of any form of good resulting from the killing of kith and kin in battle. Now, he proceeds to re-emphasize that idea in another form:—

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च।
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा॥ ३२॥

कृष्ण O Kṛṣṇa; विजयम् victory; न not; काङ्क्षे I covet; न च nor; राज्यम् kingdom; (न) च nor; सुखानि pleasures; गोविन्द O Kṛṣṇa (lit., Protector of cows); नः to us; राज्येन किम् of what use (is) kingdom; भोगैः किम् of what use (are) luxuries; जीवितेन वा or even life.

Kṛṣṇa, I do not covet victory, nor kingdom nor pleasures. Govinda, of what use will kingdom, or luxuries, or even life be to us ! (32)

Drawing a faithful picture of the state of his mind, Arjuna said that victory, kingdom and earthly pleasures which he would gain by killing those near and dear ones were not

at all wanted by him. He clearly visualized that the slaughter of those relations would bring him in this world as well as in the next nothing but mental agony and torture. Then, what for should he fight, why should he put them to death ? What should he do with a kingdom and pleasures obtained by such dreadful means ? He put it as his definite opinion that after killing them, life would be of no use to him whatsoever.

Arjuna now gives his reasons for not coveting a kingdom and other pleasures obtained by wading through the blood of his kith and kin :—

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च।
त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च॥ ३३॥
आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः।
मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः सम्बन्धिनस्तथा॥ ३४॥

येषाम् अर्थे for whose sake; **राज्यम्** (the) throne, kingdom; **नः काङ्क्षितम्** (is) coveted by us; **भोगाः** luxuries; **च** and; **सुखानि** pleasures; **ते इमे** those very persons, (viz); **आचार्याः** teachers; **पितरः** uncles; **पुत्राः** sons and nephews; **च** and; **तथैव** even so; **पितामहाः** grand-uncles (and great grand-uncles); **मातुलाः** maternal uncles; **श्वशुराः** fathers-in-law; **पौत्राः** grand-nephews; **श्यालाः** brothers-in-law (wife's brothers); **तथा** and; **सम्बन्धिनः** other relations; **प्राणान्** (their) lives; **च** and; **धनानि** riches; **त्यक्त्वा** risking; **युद्धे** on the battle-field; **अवस्थिताः** stand arrayed (here).

Those very persons for whose sake we covet the throne, luxuries and pleasures,—teachers, uncles, sons and nephews and even so grand-uncles and great grand-uncles, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grand-nephews, brothers-in-law and other relations,—are here arrayed on the battle-field risking their lives and wealth. (33,34)

Here Arjuna says that rulership of a kingdom and all the pleasures and enjoyments which follow in the wake of the possession of such authority, were not necessary for his own use at all. He knew it well that such pleasures were neither permanent, nor the possessions themselves everlasting. If he had craved for a kingdom, it was only for those brothers, friends and relations; but now he observed that they had all assembled on the battle-field ready to sacrifice their lives. Of what use would be the kingdom, luxuries and pleasures, if they all departed from the earth by mutual slaughter ? Therefore, from any point of view whatsoever, it was undesirable to start the War.

Relations like teachers, grand-uncles and uncles etc., had already been mentioned in a previous verse. Here, referring to two other relations, viz., 'wife's brothers' like Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Śikhaṇḍī and Suratha etc., and 'other relations' like Jayadratha etc., Arjuna wanted to say that in this world people exert to gain wealth and objects of enjoyment for the sake of their relations only, who were the centres of their affection. When all such relations would be killed in battle, what purpose would be served by kingship, and other objects of enjoyment ? Such a kingdom, and such pleasures, would be nothing but sources of extreme misery and distress.

Showing the relation in which he stood to the heroes assembled in the two armies Arjuna now expresses his unwillingness to kill them for any reason whatsoever:—

एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन।
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥ ३५ ॥

मधुसूदन O Kṛṣṇa (lit., the slayer of demon Madhu); घ्नतः अपि even though they should slay me; एतान् them; त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य अपि हेतोः even for the sovereignty of the three worlds; हन्तुम् to kill; न not; इच्छामि I want; महीकृते for (this) earth; किम् नु how, then (shall I kill them).

O Slayer of Madhu, I do not want to kill them, though they should slay me, even for the throne of the three worlds; how much the less for earthly lordship ! (35)

By using the words 'Ghnataḥ' and 'Api' in the above verse, Arjuna indicates that apart from the fighters on his own side, who would in no case act in opposition to him, even those of his relations who were posted in the opposite ranks, would very likely give up their desire to kill him when he would desist from the fight. For they came to oppose him in battle only with the motive of keeping the kingdom under their possession. When refraining from fight, he would himself give up all claim to the kingdom there would remain no cause for them to think of killing him. But if in spite of this, any fighter in the rival army thought of making an attempt on Arjuna's life, Arjuna for his part would not kill him.

At this point, it might be asked why he did not want to kill them, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds. In reply to this Arjuna says that nothing would be gained by slaying those near relations; on the other hand, sin would accrue from it. He thus re-emphasizes the standpoint already taken up by him in the previous verse:—

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन।
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥ ३६ ॥

जनार्दन O Kṛṣṇa (lit., one who is invoked by all men); धार्तराष्ट्रान् the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; निहत्य slaying; नः to us; का what; प्रीतिः joy; स्यात् can be; आततायिनः desperadoes (though they are); एतान् them; हत्वा killing; पापम् sin; एव only; अस्मान् us; आश्रयेत् will take hold of.

Kṛṣṇa, how can we hope to be happy slaying the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; killing these desperadoes sin will surely take hold of us. (36)

Arjuna here says that the slaughter of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons and their associates in the opposite army would bring no good, either in this world or in the next; when thus it would fail to bring about what was desired; it could never bring delight or joy in any shape or form. Therefore, he did not want to kill them from any point of view.

Lord Manu says in clear terms, in his famous Code. (VIII.350-51):—"An attacking desperado must be killed without hesitation. No sin accrues to a slayer, when he slays a desperado."*

As for a desperado, the *Vasiṣtha-Smṛti* defines him in the following words (Vide III.19):—"Criminals guilty of the following six forms of crime are classed as desperadoes:—setting fire to a house; administration of poison; attempt to attack with weapon in hand; robbing of wealth;

* आततायिनमायान्तं हन्यादेवाविचारयन्। नाततायिवधे दोषो हन्तुर्भवति कश्चन ॥

dispossessing a rightful owner of his land; abduction of a woman.''*

In Duryodhana and his friends all these marks of desperadoes could be found in their entirety. By setting fire to the house made of lac, they had attempted on the life of the Pāṇḍavas; Bhīmasena had been given poison, with his food; and now they came prepared, weapon in hand, to kill the Pāṇḍavas in battle. In the game of dice, they had defrauded the Pāṇḍavas of all their wealth and even of their kingdom. By dragging Draupadī to the open Court they had subjected her to a barbarous form of ignominy, and Jayadratha had even tried to abduct her. Under these circumstances, the idea of sin accruing from killing Duryodhana and his friends ought not to have cowed Arjuna's mind. But there is a statement in another Smṛti text to the following effect: ''He who destroys his own race and family is the greatest sinner.''†

Regarding this injunction to be of much greater weight, and stronger, than a common injunction, Arjuna gave expression to these ideas. He goes on upholding, and elucidating, this stand-point up to the very end of this chapter.

Showing so far that the slaughter of one's kith and kin was harmful from every point of view, Arjuna now pronounces his definite opinion on the subject:—

तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान्स्वबान्धवान्।
स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव॥ ३७॥

तस्मात् therefore; **माधव** O Kṛṣṇa; **स्वबान्धवान्** our relations; **धार्तराष्ट्रान्** the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; **हन्तुम्** to kill; **वयम्** we; **न अर्हाः** ought not; **हि** for; **स्वजनम्** our own kinsmen; **हत्वा** killing; **कथम्** how; **सुखिनः** happy; **स्याम** can we be.

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa, it does not behove us to kill our relations, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. For how can we be happy after killing our own kinsmen ? (37)

By using the word 'Tasmāt' (therefore) at the beginning of the verse, Arjuna meant to say that looking to the sad mental and physical plight to which he had been reduced and the reasons put forward by him against entering upon the War, and because, again, of the other thoughts which were surging within his mind, he was definitely of opinion that it would be altogether unbecoming on the part of the Pāṇḍavas to kill Duryodhana and other relations in the Kaurava army. He held that there was not the slightest possibility of the Pāṇḍavas obtaining any form of happiness, in this world or the next, by killing these near ones. Therefore, he said he did not want to fight.

At this point it may be urged that the blame for the destruction of the race and family attached equally to both the parties. Considering this, if Duryodhana did not think of retiring from the struggle, why should Arjuna, for his part, bestow so much thought on this aspect of the problem ? Arjuna gives his reply to his question in the following two verses :—

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम्॥ ३८॥

* अग्निदो गरदश्चैव शस्त्रपाणिर्धनापहः। क्षेत्रदारापहर्त्ता च षडेते ह्याततायिनः॥

† स एव पापिष्ठतमो यः कुर्यात् कुलनाशनम्।

कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम्।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन॥ ३९॥

जनार्दन O Kṛṣṇa; यदि if; अपि even; लोभोपहतचेतसः having (their) minds blinded by greed; एते these (people); कुलक्षयकृतम् resulting from the destruction of one's own race; दोषम् evil; च and; मित्रद्रोहे (involved) in treason to (one's) friends; पातकम् the sin; न not; पश्यन्ति perceive; कुलक्षयकृतम् resulting from the destruction of one's own race; दोषम् the evil; प्रपश्यद्भिः clearly seeing; अस्माभिः by us; अस्मात् पापात् from this crime; निवर्तितुम् turning away; कथम् why; न not; ज्ञेयम् should be thought of.

Even if these people, with minds blinded by greed; perceive no evil in destroying their own race and no sin in treason to friends, why should not we, O Kṛṣṇa, who see clearly the sin accruing from the destruction of one's family, think of turning away from this crime ? (38, 39)

Here Arjuna means to say that such action on the part of Duryodhana and his friends was no doubt most reprehensible, but it was not unnatural for them; for their inordinate greed had wholly destroyed their power of discrimination between good and evil. Therefore, they could not see the great evil and disaster that would inevitably follow the destruction of all members of the race, nor could they realize what a dreadful sin it was to look upon relations and friends as enemies and fight with them for mutual slaughter. Arjuna and his brothers, however, were not blinded by greed; they could clearly see what evil and disaster would ensue from the destruction of the family and race. Therefore, knowingly, and with their eyes wide open, why should they be guilty of such an outrageous sin ! They should, therefore, considering the evil nature of the act, withdraw themselves from the fight.

Arjuna now proceeds to show what evils follow the destruction of the race:—

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः।
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत॥ ४०॥

कुलक्षये with the destruction of a family; सनातनाः age-long; कुलधर्माः family traditions; प्रणश्यन्ति disappear; उत and; धर्मे नष्टे virtue having been lost; कृत्स्नम् entire; कुलम् the family; अधर्मः vice; अभिभवति takes hold of.

Age-long family traditions disappear with the destruction of a family; and virtue having been lost, vice takes hold of the entire race. (40)

Every good family is a repertorium of many good and beneficial customs and usages, which are handed down from generation to generation, and help to maintain the high standard of conduct of the family and prevent its men and women from going astray. These beneficial and uplifting customs and usages are known in one word as ''family traditions''. Through the destruction of the family, when the older members possessing knowledge of these customs and traditions have disappeared from the scene, it is but natural for the remnant of straggling women and children to lose this knowledge, and thus those traditions disappear and get lost.

There are five incentives, which compel man to keep to the path of virtue and avoid sin. These are: fear of God, command of the scriptures, fear of violation of the family traditions, State laws, fear of physical injury or pecuniary loss. Among these, God, though absolutely real, and command of the scriptures, though representing Truth, depend on man's faith, and are not direct or perceptible incentives. State laws govern only the subjects of the State; but those who wield power generally do not respect them. Fear of physical injury or pecuniary loss affects only individuals, in the majority of cases. Family traditions alone link up the individual with the family and society. The society and family which lose these beneficial customs and traditions become as unruly and wayward as a restive steed without the control of a bridle. A self-willed man will not tolerate any law, however uplifting it may be. When the members of a society or family throw off every form of restraint, sin extends its sway over that society or family as a matter of course. This is what is meant by ''sin takes hold of the entire family''.

Arjuna now proceeds to show what happens after the entire family has thus come under the sway of sin:—

अधर्माभिभवात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः॥ ४१॥

कृष्ण O Kṛṣṇa; अधर्माभिभवात् with the preponderance of vice; कुलस्त्रियः the women of the family; प्रदुष्यन्ति become corrupt; स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु (and) with the corruption of women; वार्ष्णेय O Kṛṣṇa (lit., a descendant of the Vṛṣṇi); वर्णसङ्करः intermixture of castes; जायते ensues.

With the preponderance of vice, Kṛṣṇa, the women of the family become corrupt; and with the corruption of women, O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, there ensues an intermixture of castes. (41)

With the disappearance of family traditions as men and women lose all forms of restraint, their activities, in most cases, begin to be tainted by vice; the result is that sin becomes predominant, and spreads itself over the whole society. Moral values begin to be treated as outworn formulas and lose their import in the eyes of men and women. Far from observing the rules of morality and restraint, they even do not care to know them, and make fun of those who volunteer to acquaint them with such rules of conduct, or turn hostile to them. In that state, the sacred law of conjugal fidelity, which is the very root and foundation of the social code, loses its hold on society. That ideal being lost, women of the purest families get corrupt and tainted with the vice of adultery. They have sensual commerce with men of different castes. The caste of the mother being different from that of the father, the offspring of such a union is of mixed blood. Thus the purity of the race maintained from generation to generation, gets totally lost.

Arjuna now shows the mischief caused by the intermixture of castes:—

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च।
पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः॥ ४२॥

सङ्करः admixture of blood; कुलघ्नानाम् of the destroyers of their race; च and; कुलस्य of

the race (itself); नरकाय (makes) for damnation; एव surely; लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः deprived of the offerings of rice and water (Śrāddha and Tarpaṇa); एषाम् of their race; पितरः the manes; हि also; पतन्ति fall.

Admixture of blood damns the destroyers of the race as well as the race itself. Deprived of the offerings of rice and water (Śrāddha, Tarpaṇa, etc.,), the manes of their race also fall. **(42)**

Offering of lumps of rice to the manes at the time of the Śrāddha ceremony and feeding of Brāhmaṇas, etc., for the satisfaction of the manes are collectively known as 'Piṇḍakriyā'; and the offering of water to the manes during the Tarpaṇa ceremony is known as 'Udakakriyā'. Their aggregate is called 'Piṇḍodakakriyā'. In popular language, they are known as the performance of Śrāddha and Tarpaṇa. People who are conversant with, and have faith in, scriptural injunctions and traditional customs perform these ceremonies with due reverence. But in the families of the destroyers of the race virtue being lost, the offspring that appear as the result of admixture of blood, being the products of vice and under the sway of vice, do not, in the first place, know anything about these rites and even if instructed by anybody fail to perform them due to lack of faith; and if any of them perchance performs them, they being disqualified by the rules of scriptures, their offerings do not reach the manes at all. Thus deprived of the offerings of rice and water from their descendants, the manes of the race suffer a fall from the world of the manes.

Arjuna now points out what harm is caused by the evils which bring about an intermixture of castes:—

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ ४३ ॥

वर्णसङ्करकारकैः bringing about an intermixture of castes; एतैः दोषैः through these evils; कुलघ्नानाम् of the killers of kinsmen; शाश्वताः age-long; जातिधर्माः caste-traditions; च and; कुलधर्माः family customs; उत्साद्यन्ते get extinct.

Through these evils bringing about an intermixture of castes, the age-long caste-traditions and family customs of the killers of kinsmen get extinct. **(43)**

The evils which bring about an intermixture of castes may be enumerated as follows:—(1) Destruction of the race; (2) Destruction of family traditions through destruction of the race; (3) Preponderance of vice; and (4) Fall of women from the high ideal of feminine chastity and indulgence in adultery, etc., due to preponderance of vice.

Codes of right conduct handed down from generation to generation are called 'age-long family traditions'. The Varṇa-Dharma as taught by the Vedas is implied by the word 'Jātidharma'. It lays down duties for the diverse castes and orders of society. When healthy family customs disappear through the death of the older members of the family, who are the custodians of those customs, and there is an aggravation of the evils leading to an intermixture of castes, the Varṇa-Dharma also dies a natural death. For, it cannot abide in offspring produced by the

union of parents belonging to diverse castes. That is how through the evils which bring about an intermixture of castes, both caste-traditions (Jātidharmas) and family customs (Kuladharmas), coming down from antiquity, get extinct.

The mischief caused by the extinction of family customs is now shown:—

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन।
नरकेऽनियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥ ४४ ॥

जनार्दन O Kṛṣṇa; उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणाम् मनुष्याणाम् of men who have lost their family traditions; अनियतम् for an indefinite period of time; नरके in hell; वासः residence; भवति is assured; इति so; अनुशुश्रुम we have heard.

Kṛṣṇa, we hear that men who have lost their family traditions dwell in hell for an indefinite period of time. (44)

In this verse Arjuna says that those who have lost their family traditions, and are merged wholly in vice, fall into hells like Kumbhīpāka and Raurava etc., as the result of their sins, and suffer there the tortures of hell for an indefinite length of time. This view has been handed down to him by his family-traditions. Therefore, in his opinion, no one should make an attempt to destroy his race.

Showing thus for the great evil and harm that follow the destruction of a race, Arjuna now expresses regret for the preparations he has made for carrying on the War:—

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम्।
यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥ ४५ ॥

अहो Oh; बत what a pity; वयम् we (though possessed of intelligence); महत् पापम् a great sin; कर्तुम् on committing; व्यवसिताः have set our mind; यत् in that; राज्यसुखलोभेन due to lust for throne and enjoyment; स्वजनम् our own kinsmen; हन्तुम् on killing; उद्यताः are intent.

Oh what a pity ! Though possessed of intelligence we have set our mind on the commission of a great sin in that due to lust for throne and enjoyment we are intent on killing our own kinsmen. (45)

The indeclinable particle 'Aho' indicates wonder, and the particle 'Bata' is expressive of great sorrow. Using both these in the above verse, Arjuna wants to show that the Pāṇḍavas being regarded by the whole world as virtuous and possessed of intelligence, it was in no way proper for them to be involved in an act of sin. But it was a matter for extreme regret that even they had decided to commit this dreadful sin. Referring to lust for throne and enjoyment as the motive of this great sin, Arjuna shows here that it would be a great blunder on their part to engage in war with that motive.

After expressing regret as set forth above, Arjuna now sets forth his decision:—

यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः।
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥ ४६ ॥

यदि if; अप्रतीकारम् unresisting; अशस्त्रम् unarmed, defenceless; माम् me; शस्त्रपाणयः armed with weapons; धार्तराष्ट्राः the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; रणे in battle; हन्युः should kill; तत् that; मे for me; क्षेमतरम् better; भवेत् would be.

It would be better for me if the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, armed with weapons, killed me in battle while I was unarmed and unresisting. (46)

Here Arjuna says that when, even after the commencement of war, he would thus give up his arms and refrain from offering any opposition to his adversaries, very likely they would also desist from battle, and the result would be that all their relations and friends would be saved. But if, perchance, instead of adopting that course and finding him unarmed and unwilling to fight, they attacked and killed him, such a death would be a blessed death for him. For in that case he would not be involved, firstly, in the great sin of slaughtering the family; secondly, the lives of all his relations and friends would be saved; and thirdly, the great virtue of saving the family from destruction would make it easy for him to reach the Supreme state. Arjuna was definite in his mind that his death in the above manner without any show of resistance would lead both to the protection of the family and his supreme good. That is why he described such a death as 'preferable' for him.

Anticipating the question as to what Arjuna did after expressing his sentiments to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the above words, Sañjaya says giving a description of Arjuna's condition:—

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वार्जुनः सङ्ख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत्।
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥ ४७ ॥

सङ्ख्ये on the battle-field; शोकसंविग्नमानसः with (his) mind agitated by grief; अर्जुनः Arjuna; एवम् thus; उक्त्वा having spoken; चापम् (his) bow; सशरम् with arrows (quiver); विसृज्य throwing aside; रथोपस्थे into the hinder part of (his) chariot; उपाविशत् sank.

Sañjaya said: Arjuna, whose mind was agitated by grief on the battle-field, having spoken, thus, and having thrown aside his bow and arrows, sank into the hinder part of his chariot. (47)

In this verse Sañjaya describes how Arjuna possessed by extreme dejection, and having uttered the above words, laid down his famous Gāṇḍīva bow and quiver and sinking back into his chariot quietly lost himself in a chain of miserable thoughts. The horrid picture of the destruction of his family, the horrible sin attendant on it, and the terrible consèquences of that sin began to revolve on the film of his mind. A heavy gloom cast its shadow over his face and his eyes became deeply laden with grief.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादेऽर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम
प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the first chapter entitled "The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna".

The colophon given at the end of every chapter of the Gītā reveals its glory and majesty. 'Om Tat Sat' are sacred Names of God *(vide Gītā, Chap. XVII.23)*. Sung by God Himself, it has been given the name of *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā*. The essence of the Upaniṣads is embodied in it and by itself also it is an Upaniṣad; therefore it has been designated as an Upaniṣad. It has also been termed as the science of Brahma (Brahmavidyā), because it leads to a perception of the supreme Truth and Reality about God in His absolute, formless state. It is a 'scripture of Yoga' because it reveals the secret of the practice of Karmayoga, here called Yoga, through the cultivation of disinterestedness. It records the conversation between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is God Himself, and the great devotee Arjuna, and every chapter of it contains the description of a Yoga which leads to God-Realization; therefore it has been referred to as "the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna" and every chapter designated as the Yoga of.....

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter II

When Arjuna, who had sought refuge in the Lord, asked about the certain means of driving away his grief, the Lord described the truth about the Self upto verse 30 in this chapter. In the practice of the Yoga of Knowledge, the primary emphasis is laid on hearing as well as reflection and constant meditation on the truth about the Self. Although after the thirtieth verse, through a dissertation on Arjuna's own duty, the character of the Yoga of Action has also been dealt with in this chapter, nevertheless the teachings of the chapter commence with a description of the Yoga of Knowledge or Sāṅkhyayoga, and the character of the Self has been described in it in greater detail than in other chapters; hence it has been given the name of 'Sāṅkhyayoga', or the Yoga of Knowledge.

Title of the Chapter

In the first verse of this chapter Sañjaya gives a description of Arjuna's state of dejection. In the second and third verses Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa reproaches Arjuna for his dejection accompanied by infatuation and faint-heartedness and encourages him to fight. In verses 4 and 5 Arjuna states that he would rather live on alms than slay noble elders like Bhīṣma and Droṇa. Verses 6 and 7 are devoted by Arjuna to an expression of his doubt as to whether he should fight or not, to a description of his weakness in the form of faint-heartedness and perplexity and to a prayer to the Lord, in a spirit of surrender, for proper guidance about his duty. In verse 8 declaring that undisputed sovereignty over the three worlds would not drive away his grief, he shows indifference to worldly aspiration. Then, in verses 9 and 10 Sañjaya describes how expressing his unwillingness to fight Arjuna became silent, and how Śrī Kṛṣṇa smiled at this and addressed Arjuna. In verse 11 the lord begins His teaching. Verses 12 and 13 are devoted to a description of the eternal and immutable character of the soul; verse 14 speaks of the transitory nature of sense-enjoyments with emphasis on the necessity of ignoring both pleasure and pain; verse 15 shows that the capacity to treat pleasure and pain alike leads to immortality. Verse 16 defines what is real and what is unreal; verse 17 reveals the true character of the 'real', and verse 18 the true character of the 'unreal', ending with a clear exhortation for Arjuna to fight. Verse 19 declares those as ignorant, who hold the soul as subject to death or capable of killing; while verse 20 is devoted to characterization of the soul as free from the six forms of transformation. In verse 21 it is shown that the knower of the Self neither kills anyone nor causes anyone to be killed. In verse 22 the passing of the soul from one body to another has been explained by showing its similarity to the discarding of worn-out clothes and taking new ones, and verses 23 to 25 declare that the soul can neither be cut, nor burnt, nor drenched, nor dried; that it is eternal, omnipresent, immovable, constant, everlasting, unmanifest, unthinkable and immutable, so

Summary of the Chapter

one should not grieve for it. In verses 26 and 27 it is shown that even if the soul is regarded as constanly taking birth and constantly dying, one should not lament for it; and in verse 28 it has been declared unwise to lament over the loss of bodies, because they are perishable. Verse 29 shows that the perceiver of the soul, and the speaker and hearer of the truth about it are alike rare, and verse 30 proves that inasmuch as the soul can never be slain it is not in the fitness of things to grieve for any being. Verses 31 to 36 are devoted to a consideration of Arjuna's duty as a Kṣatriya, and show that it would be improper for Arjuna, from any point of view, to desist from battle. Verse 37 declares that participation in battle is advantageous, both from the point of view of this world as well as of the next, and ends with an exhortation to Arjuna to prepare himself for the fight. Evenness of mind in pleasure and pain, gain and loss, etc., has been shown in verse 38 as the secret of remaining untouched by sin in such deeds as participation in war. In verse 39 the subject of Karmayoga (the Yoga of selfless action) has been introduced as a means of throwing off the shackles of Karma. Verse 40 is devoted to praising the greatness of Karmayoga and verse 41 to showing the difference between the determinate and one-pointed intellect and the scattered intellect of ignorant men moved by desires. Verses 42 to 44 describe the character of those who are obsessed by desire and look upon heaven as the supreme goal of life. In verse 45 Arjuna is advised to be free from desires, to rise above pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain etc., to be established in the Eternal Existance and to remain unconcerned about the supply of wants and the preservation of worldly possessions, and keep the mind under control. Then, pointing out in verse 46 that happiness accruing as the fruit of Vedic rituals has no attraction for a Brāhmaṇa who has obtained enlightenment, verse 47 is devoted to a definition of Karmayoga in a nutshell. In verse 48 equanimity is described as synonymous with Yoga. Verse 49 says that action with a selfish motive is far inferior to equanimity and that the seeker of the fruit of action is extremely poor and wretched. Verse 50 and 51 are in praise of a Karmayogī, possessing equanimity, and exhort Arjuna to apply himself to Karmayoga, making it perfectly clear that equanimity leads to the attainment of the blissful Supreme State. Then, in verses 52 and 53 the Lord states that when growing indifferent to the world, the mind becomes pure, clear and steadfast, it succeeds in realizing God. In verse 54 Arjuna puts four questions about the person possessed of a stable mind. His first question is briefly answered in verse 55, the second question in verses 56 and 57 and the third in verse 58. These verses describe the marks of one possessed of a stable mind by saying that he has no cravings and desires, is satisfied in the self, requiring no eternal means of enjoyment, remains unperturbed in sorrows, is devoid of thirst for pleasures, is absolutely free from passion, fear and anger, remains unattached to everything and neither rejoices nor recoils when meeting with good and evil, and withdrawing his senses from sense-objects keeps them under complete control. In verse 59 saying that sense-objects may cease when they are not enjoyed by the senses, but the relish for them persists and this relish disappears through God-realization, the Lord shows in verse 60 the turbulent nature of the senses, and urges in verse 61 the necessity of controlling the mind and senses and devoting oneself to God, and ends the verse with the praise of one who has conquered the senses. Verses 62 and 63 show the gradual process of man's fall and degradation through indulgence in thoughts of sense-objects and verses 64 and

65 show how placidity of mind is attained by one who acts remaining free from likes and dislikes, how his sorrows come to an end and his intellect soon becomes firmly established in God. Then, in verse 66 showing that he who has no control over his mind can have no determinate reason, thoughts of God, peace and happiness, the illustration of the wind and boat has been cited in verse 67 to demonstrate how discrimination is taken away by the sense which has the mind joined to it; and finally, verse 68 is intended to establish that in reality the man of stable mind is he who has complete control over his senses. Then, verse 69 shows how Brahmic Bliss is night to the generality of men, even as worldly enjoyment is night to the seer. Verse 70 is devoted to the praise of the exalted soul who has attained wisdom and compares him with the ocean; and verse 71 declares that supreme peace is attained by him who moves in the world free from all forms of desire, attachment, egoism and thirst for enjoyment. The chapter is concluded in verse 72 with a description of the glory of this Brahmic state.

Link of the story

After giving a description of the renowned warriors on both sides and their blowing of conches the first chapter stated, by way of introduction to the teachings of the Gītā, that Arjuna's chariot was placed between the two armies. The sight of his near and dear ones in both the armies strongly reacted on Arjuna's mind in the form of grief and infatuation and the chapter was concluded by saying how refusing to fight and laying down arms, Arjuna sank down in his chariot in utter dejection. In this circumstance, it being necessary to state how Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa tackled Arjuna and prepared him to enter the fight, Sañjaya begins the second chapter with a description of Arjuna's mental state:—

सञ्जय उवाच

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम्।
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः॥ १ ॥

तथा as mentioned before; **कृपया** with pity; **आविष्टम्** overwhelmed; **अश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम्** whose eyes were filled with tears and agitated; **विषीदन्तम्** sorrowing; **तम्** to him (Arjuna); **मधुसूदनः** the slayer of Madhu; Śrī Kṛṣṇa; **इदम्** the following; **वाक्यम्** words; **उवाच** addressed.

Sañjaya said: Śrī Kṛṣṇa then addressed the following words to Arjuna, who was as mentioned before overwhelmed with pity, whose eyes were filled with tears and agitated, and who was full of sorrow. (1)

The state of extreme dejection from which Arjuna suffered had been described in detail in the first chapter. The second chapter starts with a brief reference to that state when it says that Bhagavāṇ Śrī Kṛṣṇa addressed Arjuna, who had been completely taken up by faint-heartedness due to commiseration for his friends and relations, whose disturbed eyes had been giving out profuse tears, and who was deeply merged in grief due to the fear of destruction of his family and of the terrible sin that would accrue from such destruction.

Referring to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa by the name 'Madhusūdana' (Slayer of Madhu) in this verse, and qualifying the word 'Vākyam' (word) by 'Idam' (these) Sañjaya have a warning to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. His intention was to point out that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa had on a previous occasion killed the demon Madhu,

who had been tyrannizing over the celestials. That was how He happened to be known as 'Madhusūdana'. It was that very Śrī Kṛṣṇa who encouraged and inspired downcast and unwilling Arjuna with the following words to engage himself in the fight. Under these circumstances how could Dhṛtarāṣṭra expect a victory for his sons, who were as great tyrants as the demon Madhu, and specially when it was the Lord's chosen mission to bring about the destruction of tyrants and persecutors. Therefore, Sañjaya intended by implication to urge that those among Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons and relatives, who had survived the fearful slaughter of ten days could yet be saved if Dhṛtarāṣṭra could influence his sons to make peace with the Pāṇḍavas.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम्।
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ २ ॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; विषमे at this odd (hour); इदम् this; कश्मलम् infatuation; त्वा you; कुतः wherefrom, how; समुपस्थितम् has overtaken; अनार्यजुष्टम् (it is) shunned by noble souls; अस्वर्ग्यम् not leading to heaven; अकीर्तिकरम् not bringing fame.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, how has this infatuation overtaken you at this odd hour ? It is shunned by noble souls; neither will it bring heaven, nor fame, to you. (2)

The word 'Kaśmalam' with the adjective 'Idam', in this verse, indicates Arjuna's heaviness of heart and low spirits, due to infatuation. The Lord here administers as snub to Arjuna, and expressing wonder asks how in that dangerous and difficult situation, viz., on the battle-field, where dejection and cowardliness were wholly out of place, and just at the moment when the battle was to commence, a hero and fighter like him, who was capable of easily vanquishing the greatest of Mahārathīs, should be overtaken by an unworthy faint-heartedness, which was not at all expected of him. Wherefrom did he get it ?

Calling this dejection and faint-heartedness of Arjuna as unworthy of noble souls and calculated neither to lead to heaven, nor to bring fame, the Lord gives His reasons for expressing amazement and wonder. The intention was that the sentiment with which Arjuna was now overpowered was not entertained by men possessed of nobility of character, and was not likely to lift Arjuna to heaven or contribute to his fame. Out of the four objects of life it would lead to the fulfilment of none—neither of Mokṣa (salvation), nor of Dharma (virtue), nor of Artha (wealth), nor of Kāma (enjoyment). Therefore, possessed of a strong intellect as he was, how could Arjuna be subject to such a depression of spirits at that odd hour on the battle-field, faced with the imminent danger of a clash of arms with very powerful adversaries ?

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ ३ ॥

पार्थ O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; क्लैब्यम् to unmanliness; मा स्म गमः yield not; एतत् this; त्वयि You; न not; उपपद्यते becomes; परन्तप O scorcher of enemies; क्षुद्रम् paltry; हृदयदौर्बल्यम् faint-heartedness; त्यक्त्वा shaking off; उत्तिष्ठ stand up.

Yield not to unmanliness, Arjuna; ill does it become you. Shaking off this paltry faint-heartedness stand up, O scorcher of enemies. (3)

The other name of Kuntī, mother of the Pāṇḍavas, was Pṛthā. Kuntī was a heroic mother. When Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa had gone to Hastināpura as a messenger of peace to try for an amicable settlement of the dispute between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, and met there His father's sister, Kuntī, the latter had sent through Him a message, full of sentiments of the most heroic type, to her son Arjuna. In that message, citing the instance of Bidulā and her son Sañjaya, Kuntī had encouraged Arjuna to establish the claim of the Pāṇḍavas over their kingdom by the arbitrament of war. Therefore, addressing Arjuna as 'Pārtha', Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa reminds Arjuna of that message, worthy of a true Kṣatriya mother, and intends to convey by the first half of the verse that as a hero himself, Arjuna was a worthy son of a worthy mother, for whom it was quite out of place to be overcome by unmanliness and cowardice. Possessed as he was of incomparable valour and skill as a fighter, which invariably struck terror into the hearts of the greatest of heroes and generals, to what a sad plight he had brought himself,—his hair standing on end, face drooping and trembling, the Gāṇḍīva about to drop from his hand, and the mind, merged in grief, quite perplexed and confused. This unmanliness and faint-heartedness was never worthy of him.

He who scorches the foe by virulence of attack is called a 'Parantapa'. Here the intention of addressing Arjuna as 'Parantapa' is to remind him of his fame as a 'scorcher of foes'. Being the vanquisher of extremely powerful demons like the Nivātakavacas and others, how could he now adopt such an attitude of cowardice, and unmanliness, which were the reverse of what a Kṣatriya should possess, and would thus delight the heart of his enemies instead of terrifying them as before.

By asking Arjuna to "shake off this paltry faint-heartedness and stand up", the Lord shows that in the heart of a hero like Arjuna there should be no place for pusillanimity, which is invariably rejected by heroes, and is entertained only by cowards, who feel scared at the sight of a battle. Therefore, the Lord urges him to throw it off immediately and prepare and harden himself for the fight.

As a rejoinder to these observations of the Lord, Arjuna shows, in two verses, the impropriety of fighting elders, who were an object of reverence to him, and gives out, again, what he considered to be his definite decision in the matter.

अर्जुन उवाच

कथं भीष्ममहं सङ्ख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन।

इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन॥ ४॥

मधुसूदन O Kṛṣṇa (lit., Slayer of Madhu); **अहम्** I; **भीष्मम्** Bhīṣma; **च** and; **द्रोणम्** Droṇa; **सङ्ख्ये** on the battle-field; **इषुभिः** with arrows; **कथम्** how; **प्रतियोत्स्यामि** shall fight; **अरिसूदन** O destroyer of foes; **पूजार्हौ** (they are) both worthy of adoration.

Arjuna said: How, Kṛṣṇa, shall I fight Bhīṣma and Droṇa with arrows on the battle-field ? They are worthy of deepest reverence, O destroyer of foes. (4)

Addressing the Lord as 'Slayer of Madhu' and 'Destroyer of foes' and using the word 'Katham' (how), Arjuna expresses his surprise. His intention is to show that Bhīṣma and Droṇa, with whom the Lord was encouraging him to fight, were neither demons nor enemies; on the other hand, they were very respected elders. Under the circumstance, how did the Lord, contrary to His nature, exhort Arjuna to fight his elders? How could Arjuna involve himself in the commission of that dreadful sin ?

By using the word 'Iṣubhiḥ' Arjuna means to show that elders against whom the use of even light words was considered as a great sin, how could he range himself against them in a fight with sharp arrows? He, therefore, wondered how Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa exhorted him to do what appeared to him to be an utterly sinful action.

गुरूनहत्वा हि महानुभावान् श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके।
हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान्॥ ५॥

महानुभावान् noble; गुरून् elders; अहत्वा without slaying; इह लोके in this world; भैक्ष्यम् alms; अपि even; भोक्तुम् to live on; श्रेयः (is) better; हि because; गुरून् elders; हत्वा (even after) killing; इह in this (world); रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् blood-stained; अर्थकामान् (in the form of) wealth and sense-enjoyments; भोगान् pleasures; एव only; तु after all; भुञ्जीय I shall enjoy.

It is better to live on alms in this world without slaying these noble elders, because even after killing them we shall after all enjoy only blood-stained pleasures in the form of wealth and sense-enjoyments. (5)

The word 'Gurūn with the adjective 'Mahānubhāvān' points to teachers like Droṇācārya and Kṛpācārya, and elderly relations like Bāhlīka, Bhīṣma, Somadatta, Bhūriśravā and Śalya, etc., who were all noble in character, posted in the army of Duryodhana. By using the indeclinable 'Api' after the word 'Bhaikṣyam' it is indicated that though it was considered dishonourable for a Kṣatriya to live on alms, such a livelihood was, indeed, better than the enjoyment of the pleasures of kingship obtained through the massacre of noble elders who were objects of reverence and respect. By using the adjective 'Rudhirapradigdhān' and 'Arthakāmān' and the indeclinable 'Eva' after the noun 'Bhogān', Arjuna compares by implication the value of the lives of those noble elders with what he would actually gain by the most reprehensible act of killing them. He would gain neither salvation nor merit through that act, but only wealth and sense-enjoyments, which were valueless as compared to the lives of those elders. And these too he would gain as the fruit of slaughter of those elders, and therefore they would be as if stained with their blood. In his opinion, therefore, killing elders for obtaining such pleasures and enjoyments could never be meet and proper.

Some commentators have taken the word 'Arthakāmān' as an attribute of 'Gurūn'; but this does not appear to us to be a proper interpretation inasmuch as Arjuna has spoken of these elders in this very verse as 'noble', and he could not be expected to speak of them in the same breath as obsessed by greed for wealth, the two attributes being naturally contradictory. We have therefore chosen to interpret 'Arthakāmān' as we have done.

Even after giving out his definite decision in these words when Arjuna found that

he was not fully satisfied, and doubt arose in his mind about the correctness of his attitude, he, again, spoke as follows:—

न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषामस्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः॥ ६॥

एतत् this; च even; न not; विद्मः we know; नः for us; कतरत् which of the two courses (to fight or not to fight); गरीयः (is) preferable; यद् वा (nor do we know) whether; जयेम we shall win; यदि वा or whether; नः us; जयेयुः they will conquer; यान् whom; हत्वा killing; न जिजीविषामः we do not wish to live; ते एव those very; धार्तराष्ट्राः sons of Dhṛtarāṣtra; प्रमुखे in the enemy ranks; अवस्थिताः stand.

We do not even know which is preferable for us—to fight or not to fight; nor do we know whether we shall win or whether they will conquer us. Those very sons of Dhṛtarāṣtra, killing whom we do not even wish to live, stand in the enemy ranks. (6)

By saying "we do not know which is preferable for us." Arjuna indicates that he was not in a position to decide whether it was better for him to fight or to refrain from fight; for while on the one hand it was laid down as the duty of a Kṣatriya to fight, the destruction on the other hand of the family and race as the result of such a fight was also declared as an evil and a sin.

Again, when Arjuna says "nor do we know whether we shall win, or they will conquer us," he means that if it was held that it was better to fight, he was unaware whether the crown of victory would belong to his side or would be wrested from his hands by his adversaries.

Further, when Arjuna says "killing whom we do not even wish to live, those very sons of Dhṛtarāṣtra are arrayed against us," he means to say that if it was granted that the battle would end in a victory for his side, even then it did not appear to him advisable to engage in that fight. For those real cousins of his, Duryodhana and others, killing whom he did not even wish to live, stood arrayed before him to meet their death in that fight. If at all he attained a victory, it would be gained by putting those cousins to death. Therefore, he was puzzled and perplexed and could not decide for himself what was the proper course for him to adopt.

Expressing in these words his inability to ascertain his duty, Arjuna now takes refuge in the Lord and prays that the Lord may enlighten and guide him definitely and clearly as regards his duty.

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्॥ ७॥

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः with my very being tainted by the vice of faint-heartedness; धर्मसम्मूढचेताः (and my) mind being puzzled with regard to duty; त्वाम् You; पृच्छामि I ask; यत् which; निश्चितम् decidedly; श्रेयः good; स्यात् is; तत् that; मे me; ब्रूहि tell; अहम् I (am); ते Your; शिष्यः disciple (lit., worthy of instruction); त्वाम् in You; प्रपन्नम् having taken refuge; माम् me; शाधि (pray) instruct.

With my very being tainted by the vice of faint-heartedness and my mind puzzled with regard to duty, I am asking you. Tell me that which is decidedly good; I am Your disciple. Pray instruct me, who have put myself into Your hands. (7)

The word 'Kārpaṇya' is an abstract noun derived from the adjective 'Kṛpaṇa', which conveys various meanings:—

(1) A miser, who even though possessing abundant wealth, does not like, owing to excessive greed and attachment for wealth, to spend even a farthing either in charity or in satisfying the legitimate needs of himself or of his dependants is a 'Kṛpaṇa'.

(2) The main object of human life, as pointed out by the scriptures and declared by saints, who are the saviours of humanity, is realization of God through attainment of Knowledge about the reality of God. He who forgetting this primary goal of existence wastes his life only in enjoying sense-objects, that man of feeble intellect is also called 'Kṛpaṇa'. The Śruti says:—

यो वा एतदक्षरं गार्ग्यविदित्वाऽस्माल्लोकात्प्रैति स कृपणः।

(*Bṛhadāraṇyaka.*, III. viii. 10)

"Gārgī ! whoever departs from this earth without knowing God, the Imperishable, is a 'Kṛpaṇa'.

The Lord too has called in the Gītā men attached to worldly enjoyments and power, seeking the fruits of action as 'Kṛpaṇa' (II.49).

(3) One with a wretched and miserable state of mind is also, in a general sense, designated as a 'Kṛpaṇa'.

The 'Kārpaṇya' complained of by Arjuna was neither of the nature of miserliness, produced by greed, nor of attachment to worldly enjoyments. For Arjuna was by nature an extremely generous and charitable man, and a master of his senses. In the Gītā itself he clearly states that he coveted neither victory, nor kingdom, nor pleasures, for his own sake; those relations of him for whom these things were needed were arrayed before him to lay down their lives. He did not want to kill Duryodhana and other relations even for the sovereignty of the three worlds; how, then, for this earth ? (Chap. I.32-35). Undisputed sovereignty over the entire earth and lordship over the gods could not drive away his grief (Chap. II.8). He who was prepared to sacrifice so much, could neither be miserly by nature, nor attached to worldly enjoyments. Besides, interpretation of the word in this sense does not fit in with the context here.

The 'Kāpraṇya' by which Arjuna was possessed was a sort of lowness of spirits, which expressed itself in the form of faint-heartedness and grief mixed up with compassion. Sañjaya, in the first verse of the chapter, referred to this very state of Arjuna when he spoke of the latter as 'overwhelmed with pity'. In verse 3 of this chapter, the Lord uses the word 'unmanliness' to describe this very state of Arjuna. All these clearly indicate that the 'Kārpaṇya' of Arjuna was nothing but faint-heartedness coupled with compassion produced by the fear of loss of his kith and kin.

As an ideal Kṣatriya fighter Arjuna was, by his very nature, a hero. Cowardliness of spirit was a weakness in his case, to whatever cause it might be attributed. Therefore, Arjuna calls it in this verse as the 'vice of faint-heartedness'.

On account of this faint-heartedness, Arjuna's very nature as a Kṣatriya, adorned with such qualities as valour, prowess, firmness, adroitness and courage, etc., had been vitiated; that is why his very limbs were giving way, the mouth was parched, the frame was shaking, the skin appeared to be burning all over and the mind was puzzled and reeling as it were. Observing these marks of weakness in him, which were quite opposed to his

nature, appearing as the result of his unmanliness of spirit, Arjuna says in this verse, "My very being has been tainted by the vice of faint-heartedness."

He whose mind had become wholly incapable of ascertaining what is virtue and what is vice, what is duty and what is interdicted, is called 'Dharmasammūḍhacetāḥ', i.e., one whose mind is puzzled with regard to duty. The mind of Arjuna at this time was in a state of terrible confusion with regard to his duty. From the point of view of protection of subjects, the duty of a Kṣatriya and vindication of his rightful claim, he considered war to be a righteous duty and thought it advisable to engage in the fight; while, on the other hand, the unmanly spirit that had now taken possession of him, unfolding to his mind the various dreadful effects of the war, was trying to force him to take up the profession of a beggar, adopt Saṁnyāsa and retire to the forest. The mind obsessed by compassion did not allow the intellect to function freely and come to a decision, and finding himself entirely puzzled and perplexed, Arjuna expresses himself as above.

The words "Tell me what is decidedly good" should not be interpreted to mean that Arjuna was frightened at the sight of the very powerful Kaurava army, protected by such invincible and world-renowned heroes and fighters as Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Karṇa, etc.,—an army much larger than that of the Pāṇḍavas,—and despairing of victory, approached the Lord for a definite light as to whether it would be "good" for him to fight, or to retire from the battle with a view to ascertaining whether victory or defeat would follow his footsteps. Here the predominant sentiment of his heart was affection and tenderness for friends and relations. There was, again, the fear of sin that would attach to him as the result of the destruction of friends and relations, which might be a great obstacle to his attainment of the supreme good. As opposed to this there was also the slow stirring of thought that renunciation on his part of the recognized duty of a Kṣatriya to engage in a righteous war might also be wrong, and might prove a hindrance to the attainment of supreme good. That is why he wanted to know what was "decidedly good". His question, therefore, had no relation with victory or defeat in war; its object was to know what was conducive to supreme good in the form of God-realization. In short, Arjuna here says, "Lord, I have wholly lost my capacity to ascertain what is my duty. Pray tell me definitely how I can attain the supreme good."

Arjuna was Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear friend. Spiritually speaking, they might have been on different levels; but in practical life the relation between Arjuna and Śrī Kṛṣṇa was, in almost all places, that of equality. While dining, reposing in bed or going from one place to another, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa used to show the same consideration to Arjuna as He bestowed on His own Self, and Arjuna also, for his part, reciprocated that sentiment of equality and friendship, though maintaining in his heart deep reverence and respect for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's spiritual superiority. But now finding himself in a most deplorable state of mind, Arjuna felt that he was not fit to maintain equality with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Between two equals there might be exchange of advice and counsel, but no instruction as from a superior to an inferior; there might be prompting and suggestion, but no command. Arjuna realized that suggestion and advice would not help him at that stage to get out of the mental rut. What he needed was a true Guide and Teacher, who would command him to follow a certain path, and driving out all his grief and infatuation, would help him to attain the

supreme good. Who could be a better guide to him than Śrī Kṛṣṇa ? But the shower of nectar in the form of a Guru's instruction fell only when the soil of the disciple's heart was ready to receive it. Therefore, Arjuna now says, "Lord, I am Your disciple."

There are many types of disciples. The disciple who after receiving instruction from the Guru depends on self-effort centred in the ego, or looks to other sources of help than that of the Sadguru, cannot derive true benefit from the grace of the Guru. Therefore along with the declaration of his discipleship, Arjuna takes up the attitude of exclusive surrender, and says, "Lord, I am not only Your disciple, but I have also taken refuge in You". The root of the word 'Prapanna' means surrender of the self to God, knowing and realizing Him to be the repository of all power and the highest Being. The term is synonymous with 'taking refuge in the Lord', 'throwing of the self at the Lord's feet', and 'offering the self to God'. The spirit of a 'Prapanna' is truly cultivated when one completely, and for all time, throws one self at the feet of God and keeps looking on at the Lord's enchanting face without a twinkle in the eye and with the mind constantly engaged in the thought of God from the exclusive desire of always acting as a mere puppet in His hands. He believes, on the one hand, that God is almighty, omniscient, the knower of all hearts, an endless ocean of innumerable virtues, the supreme master, the infinite repository of greatness, love, valour, virtue, knowledge, non-attachment, etc., the remover of all afflictions, shackle of Karma, and every form of doubt and error, the dearest lover, the dearest friend, the dearest relation, the Supreme Guide and the Supreme Divinity, and regards himself, on the other, as standing alone in the world utterly helpless and without any support, devoid of intelligence, lacking in strength, lacking in substance, and depending thoroughly and exclusively on God's help, support, knowledge, power and incomparable affection for the devotee who thus takes refuge in Him. Arjuna's desire was to develop such an attitude of surrender to the Lord, and inspired by this feeling he now says, "Lord, I am Your disciple. Pray instruct me, who have taken refuge in You." When this idea of true surrender to God, the best and most perfect flower of spiritual insight, would develop into true surrender under the influence of the most esoteric teaching of the Lord contained in verses 65 and 66 of the eighteenth chapter, and Arjuna would be prepared to carry out the behest of the Lord without any question, the Gītā itself would reach its conclusion. Thus the Sādhanā of the Gītā commences from this verse, the seed is sown here for the beginning of the Gītā gospel, and the Sādhanā would reach its consummation when the Lord would exhort Arjuna to "surrender all duties" to Him. There lies the natural conclusion of the Gītā.

Thus praying to the Lord for instruction and guidance, Arjuna gives his reasons for the prayer, in the course of which he also gives expression to his oppressive thoughts.

न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद् यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम्।
अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम्॥ ८॥

हि for; भूमौ on (this) earth; असपत्नम् undisputed; ऋद्धम् affluent; राज्यम् kingdom; च and; सुराणाम् over the gods; आधिपत्यम् lordship; अवाप्य on obtaining; अपि even; न not; प्रपश्यामि I see; यत् (that) which; मम इन्द्रियाणाम् on my senses; उच्छोषणम् exercising a withering effect; शोकम् grief; अपनुद्यात् can drive away.

For even on obtaining undisputed sovereignty and an affluent kingdom on this earth and lordship over the gods, I do not see any means that can drive away the grief which is drying up my senses. (8)

Referring to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's exhortation to face his adversaries in the fight, Arjuna says here that the best result that could be expected from the battle was a victory which might bring him undisputed sovereignty over the earth; but the more he thought over the matter the more he felt that, even if he obtained lordship over the gods, not to speak of sovereignty over the earth, that would not remove the grief which was drying up his senses. He, therefore, appeals to the Lord to show him some definite and unfailing way that would remove his grief and bring him everlasting happiness and bliss.

It is stated now what Arjuna did after uttering these words:—

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तप।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह॥ ९॥

परन्तप O scorcher of enemies; गुडाकेशः an epithet of Arjuna; हृषीकेशम् to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; एवम् thus; उक्त्वा having spoken; गोविन्दम् Śrī Kṛṣṇa; न not; योत्स्ये will fight; इति that; ह clearly; उक्त्वा telling (again); तूष्णीम् silent; बभूव became.

Sañjaya said: O king, having thus spoken to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna again said to Him, "I will not fight," and became silent. (9)

In this verse, Sañjaya says to Dhṛtarāṣṭra that after taking refuge in the Lord, in the manner described above, and praying to Him for instruction and guidance, and then expressing his own oppressive and disturbing thoughts, Arjuna now definitely said that he would not fight, and there-after became silent.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called 'Govinda' because, according to the derivation 'गोभिर्वेदवाक्यैर्विद्यते लभ्यते', the truth about God is known through the words of the Vedas. The Gītā also says—'वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यः'—"It is I whom the four Vedas seek to know." (XV.15)

Anticipating the question as to what Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa did when Arjuna became silent, Sañjaya says:—

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः॥ १०॥

भारत O descendent of Bharata, Dhṛtarāṣṭra; हृषीकेशः Śrī Kṛṣṇa; उभयोः सेनयोः of the two armies; मध्ये in the midst; विषीदन्तम् sorrowing; तम् him (Arjuna); प्रहसन् laughing (at him); इव as if; इदम् the following; वचः words; उवाच addressed.

Then, O Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as if smiling, addressed the following words to sorrowing Arjuna, in the midst of the two armies. (10)

Referring here to him who was "sorrowing in the midst of the two armies", Sañjaya indirectly points out that the same Arjuna who, a little while ago, had requested

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to place his chariot between the two armies in a bellicose and challenging spirit, was now at the sight of his kith and kin in the two opposing armies greatly perturbed and agitated due to infatuation. It was to this Arjuna, obsessed by grief, the Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa addressed His words.

By the words, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as if laughing at him, addressed the following words," Sañjaya gives an indication of what the Lord said, and the spirit in which He said it. The intention was to bring out that instead of maintaining the fighting attitude which Arjuna had evinced when he requested the Lord to draw up the chariot between the two armies, he was now swayed by the opposite sentiment of grief; and, again, after taking refuge in the Lord, and praying to him for instruction and guidance, and without waiting for His advice, he had straightway declared that he would not fight. How utterly inconsistent these actions of Arjuna were ! Therefore, mentally laughing at these inconsistencies, the Lord said:—

When thus Arjuna, merged in distressing thoughts and taking refuge in the Lord, sought for the way to overcome his intense grief, and declared that neither sovereignty over the earth nor lordship over gods would drive away that grief, the Lord considering him a fit recipient for instruction and in order to remove his grief and infatuation for all time, first shows him what is real and what is unreal, and trying to prove that it was Arjuna's duty to engage in the fight even from the point of view of Knowledge, enters into a discussion of the Path of Knowledge.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः॥ ११॥

त्वम् you; अशोच्यान् those who should not be grieved for; अन्वशोचः have grieved over; च and (yet); प्रज्ञावादान् words of wisdom; भाषसे you speak; पण्डिताः wise men; गतासून those whose life-breath has departed, the dead; च and; अगतासून् those whose life-breath has not yet departed, who are still living; न not; अनुशोचन्ति sorrow over.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, you grieve over those who should not be grieved for, and yet speak like the learned; wise men do not sorrow over the dead or the living. (11)

It is with reference to Arjuna's state of grief at the sight of his uncles, grand-uncles, other relations and teachers etc., in both the armies from fear of their destruction, as described by himself in verses 28 to 30 of the first chapter, his sorrow over the preparations for war as expressed in verse 45, and the agitated state of his mind as described by Sañjaya in verse 47, that the Lord here says, "You gireve over those who should not be grieved for." This verse marks the beginning of the gospel of the Gītā, which reaches its conclusion in verse 66 of the eighteenth chapter.

Referring to the great sin accruing from the destruction of one's race in verses 31 to 44 of Chapter I and 4 to 6 of Chapter II and egoistically referring to the meanness of Duryodhana and others and harping on his own sense of duty, Arjuna again attempted to establish by various arguments that it would be wrong to engage in that fight. Referring to those arguments of Arjuna, the Lord says in this verse that he was talking

like the learned.

The uppermost thought in Arjuna's mind at that time was that the destruction of his race, which was an inevitable consequence of the war, would lead to a confusion of castes and bring about the fall of his ancestors who were in the other world. He was also feeling anxious for his kith and kin who were arrayed against him, and considered sovereignty and other enjoyments meaningless without them. He also apprehended that the destruction of race would further lead to the corruption of women. This is what is meant by Arjuna's grieving for the dead and the living, and the Lord tells Arjuna that the wise never grieve in this way. For in the eyes of the wise man God, who is an embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, is the only abiding reality and nothing exists apart from Him. He is the Self of all and is absolutely indestructible, whereas the bodies are transient and cannot stay. The association as well as the separation of the body and the Soul, though inevitable from the worldly point of view, are only imaginary as a dream. Under such circumstances, for whom should he grieve and why? But Arjuna was certainly grieving, which showed that he was not truly learned, but was merely holding forth as a learned man.

In the preceding verse Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna that he was grieving for Bhīṣma and other relations who should not be grieved for. The question naturally arises, why should they not be grieved for ? The Lord, therefore, first of all, establishes the eternal character of the soul, and proves that from the point of view of the soul it was unwise to grieve for them:-

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम्॥ १२॥

न तु एव neither (is it a fact that); अहम् I; जातु ever; न not; आसम् was; न nor (that); त्वम् you (were not); न nor again (that); इमे these; जनाधिपाः kings (lit., rulers of men); न च एव nor (is it a fact that); अतः परम् subsequent to this, hereafter; वयम् we; सर्वे all; न not; भविष्यामः shall be.

In fact, there was never a time when I was not, or when you or these kings were not. Nor is it a fact that hereafter we shall all cease to be. (12)

Establishing in this verse the everlasting character of the soul, the Lord shows to Arjuná that neither those whose loss he feared, nor Arjuna himself, nor even Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was, is, or would ever be non-existent at any time. They existed even before the birth and appearance of their present bodies, and would continue to exist after the disappearance of those bodies. Destruction of bodies does not lead to the destruction of the soul. Therefore, Arjuna should not grieve for those relations out of fear of their destruction.

Thus showing the soul as eternal by nature, the Lord now proceeds in the next verse to bring out its immutable character, thereby proving that it was an error to grieve for the soul:—

देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति॥ १३॥

यथा just as; अस्मिन् देहे in this body; देहिनः (are predicated) of the soul residing in the body; कौमारम् boyhood; यौवनम् youth; जरा (and) old age; तथा even so; देहान्तरप्राप्तिः acquisition of another body (is predicated); तत्र about this matter; धीरः the wise man; न not; मुह्यति gets deluded.

Just as boyhood, youth and old age are attributed to the soul through this body, even so it attains another body. The wise man does not get deluded about this. (13)

Regarding the soul as subject to change, the unwise think that it suffers great pain both when leaving a particular body and taking a new birth, and therefore grieve for it. In the present verse, the Lord declares this unwise. He says that just as childhood, youth and old age do not really belong to the soul, but pertain only to the gross body, and are only attributed to the soul, even so it is not the soul which leaves a body and takes another; it is the astral body which undergoes these experiences, and they are attributed to the soul. Being unaware of this truth, it is only the unwise who grieve over one's transition from one body to another. The wise never do so; for in the eyes of the wise the soul has no relation with the body. Therefore, Arjuna should not grieve for those relatives.

In the preceding verse, showing that the soul was eternal and immutable, the Lord established the position that it was unwise to grieve for the same. But, here, it may be urged that notwithstanding the eternal and immutable character of the soul union with, and separation from, one's kith and kin do bring actual experiences of pleasure and pain. Therefore, how can grief be avoided ? In reply to this the Lord declares all contact and separation to be transitory by nature and urges that both pleasure and pain arising from them should be avoided:—

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ १४ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः giving rise to the (feelings of) heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc.; मात्रास्पर्शाः contacts between the senses and their objects; तु indeed; आगमापायिनः (are) fleeting; अनित्याः (and) transitory; भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; तान् them, तितिक्षस्व (therefore) endure.

O son of Kuntī, the contacts between the senses and their objects, which give rise to the feeling of heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc., are transitory and fleeting; therefore, Arjuna, avoid them. (14)

That by which things are measured, or by which knowledge of things is obtained, is called a 'Mātrā'. Therefore, the term 'Mātrā' is intended here to mean all the senses, including the mind; and 'Sparśa' means contact. Thus the compound word 'Mātrāsparśāḥ' comes to mean contact of the mind and senses with their respective objects, e.g., sound, touch, colour, taste and smell.

Heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc., mentioned in this verse, stand for all pairs of contraries. Therefore, when the Lord says that contacts between the senses and their objects give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc., He shows that it is these objects which when contacted by the senses give rise to every form of dual experience, e.g., the feelings of heat and cold, love and hatred, joy and grief, pleasure and pain, concord and discord, etc. All morbid feelings arise from a sense of

permanence of the objects of senses. Therefore, knowing and realizing those objects as transitory and fleeting by nature, their contact should not be allowed to produce any unhealthy reaction on the mind.

Describing the contact between the senses and their objects as coming and going and impermanent, by nature, and asking Arjuna to ignore the same, the Lord has shown that such contacts, giving rise to pleasure and pain, being transitory do not contain the least trace of true happiness. Therefore, Arjuna is being advised to avoid them, that is, he is being asked not to rejoice or grieve over their coming and going, nor to entertain any partiality or prejudice for or against these. Meeting with one's near and dear ones is also included in this; for as in the case of other objects it is through the mind and senses that we are united with or separated from our relatives. Hence it should be understood that the Lord exhorts Arjuna to overcome pleasure and pain resulting from all such contacts and separation.

Anticipating the question as to what will be the effect of ignoring such contacts of senses and their objects, the Lord says:—

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते॥ १५॥

हि for; पुरुषर्षभ O best of men, Arjuna; समदुःखसुखम् to whom pain and pleasure are alike; धीरम् wise; यम् पुरुषम् the person whom; एते these (contacts); न not; व्यथयन्ति torment; सः he; अमृतत्वाय for immortality; कल्पते becomes eligible.

Arjuna, the wise man to whom pain and pleasure are alike, and who is not tormented by these contacts, becomes eligible for immortality. (15)

The indeclinable 'Hi' in this verse has been used to denote reason. The intention is to point out the reason why contacts between the senses and their objects should be avoided.

'Ṛsabha' signifies 'the best', or 'the most excellent'. Thus the compound word 'Puruṣarṣabha' here denotes the most heroic and strongest of men. Addressing Arjuna as 'Puruṣarṣabha' in this verse, the Lord intends to say that being the best of heroes and strongest of men, indifference to pleasure and pain etc., is a part of Arjuna's nature; therefore it should be quite easy for him to rise above all these dual experiences.

The word 'Dhīram' is generally used with reference to the God-realized soul; but, now and then, it is also used to signify a soul sufficiently qualified to realize God. Here it means a practicant who has reached a state of ripeness in the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga, or the Yoga of Knowledge.

The adjective 'Samaduḥkhasukham' (to whom pleasure and pain are alike) is used to denote the essential qualification of a 'Dhīra'. He who looks upon both pleasure and pain with an equal eye, that is, regarding both the experiences as fleeting, makes no distinction between them, is a 'Dhīra'; he alone can overcome them without being affected by them.

Contacts between the senses and their objects, which were expressed by the word Mātrāsparśāḥ' in the preceding verse, are referred to again in this verse by the word 'Ete' (these). And by saying, 'who is not tormented by these contacts,' it is intended to show that when the practicant through the repeated and constant practice of overcoming the feelings of attrac ion and repulsion, joy

and grief, arising from the contact of, or separation from, objects of senses, attains a state when the contact of any sense with any object of enjoyment fails to produce any kind of agitation or morbid feeling in his mind, then should it be regarded that he is a 'Dhīra' or a wise man to whom pain and pleasure have become equal.

By saying 'he becomes eligible for immortality the Lord means to say that the wise man referred to above as possessed of an equable mind, who remains unperturbed and unaffected by any contact whatsoever, becomes qualified to attain Mokṣa or realize God and very soon succeeds in directly perceving Him.

In verses 12 and 13 of this chapter the Lord proved the soul to be eternal and immutable, and in verse 14 He declared the contact of the senses and mind with objects of senses as fleeting and transitory. But He did not make it clear how the soul was eternal, and how such contact was transitory. Therefore, in the next verse, the Lord defines what is real and what is unreal in order to show how to distinguish between the two:—

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ १६ ॥

असतः of the unreal; भावः being; न not; विद्यते is; तु whereas; सतः of the real; अभावः negation; न not; विद्यते is; उभयोः अपि अनयोः of both these; अन्तः reality, essence; तत्त्वदर्शिभिः by the seers of truth; दृष्टः has (thus) been perceived.

The unreal has no existence, and the real never ceases to be, the reality of both has thus been perceived by the seers of truth. (16)

The term 'Asataḥ' in this verse signifies the ever-changing physical body, the senses as well as their objects, including all that is material in this objective world. Therefore, when the Lord says: 'the unreal has no existence', He means to say that it was non-existent even before the time of its so-called existence, and will be non-existent afterwards; therefore, in reality, it does not exist even when it appears to exist. Under the circumstance, if Arjuna's grief was due to his apprehension with regard to the destruction of either the physical bodies of Bhīṣma and other relatives, or of any other material object, it was unwise for him to indulge in such grief.

'Sataḥ' or 'the real' connotes the Supreme Spirit, which is all-pervading and eternal. The words 'it never ceases to be' are intended to convey the idea that at no time, and under no circumstance, the soul undergoes any change, or ceases to exist. It ever remains in the same state of being, constant and unchangeable. Therefore, if the cause of Arjuna's grief was fear of destruction of the soul of Bhīṣma and other relatives, it was equally improper for him to entertain such grief.

The words 'Ubhayoḥ' (both) and 'Anayoḥ' (these) point to the above 'Asat' and 'Sat', 'unreal' and 'real'. Distinguishing between the real and the unreal, the saints and seers of truth reached the conclusion that things which changed, suffered destruction, and did not last for ever were unreal, that is to say, unreal things could never exist while that which at no time, and under no circumstance, underwent any form of change and destruction, and ever continued to exist was the real; that is to say, the real never ceased to exist. This is what is meant by perception by the seers of truth of the reality of both the unreal and the real.

Of the 'real' it is stated in the preceding verse that it never ceases to be. The Lord now proceeds to tell us what that 'real' is:—

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति॥ १७॥

अविनाशि imperishable; तत् that; तु alone; विद्धि know; येन by whom; इदम् this; सर्वम् all; ततम् (is) pervaded; अस्य अव्ययस्य of this indestructible (substance); विनाशम् destruction; कश्चित् न no one; कर्तुम् अर्हति has power to bring about.

Know that alone to be imperishable, which pervades this universe; for no one has power to destroy this indestructible substance. (17)

The word 'Idam' together with 'Sarvam' in the present verse refers to all material things like the body, the senses, the mind, all objects of enjoyment and places of enjoyment, etc. All these things which come under the common connotation of Matter are pervaded by the Supreme Spirit, which represents the principle of life or Consciousness. By characterizing the Supreme Spirit as imperishable, the Lord indicates that the term 'imperishable, denotes the same supreme soul which He defined in the preceding verse under the name of 'Sat', and which has been determined by the seers of truth as the only 'real' substance.

By the statement that "none can bring about the destruction of this indestructible substance", the Lord has shown that just as the cloud is pervaded by ether, even so all material objects are pervaded by the Supreme Spirit, so that no material object possesses the capacity to destroy this supreme soul. Therefore, being constant and ever-existent, the soul alone represents what can be termed as 'real'.

Explaining thus what is real, the Lord proceeds in the next verse to tell us what is 'unreal':—

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत॥ १८॥

अनाशिनः imperishable; अप्रमेयस्य indefinable; नित्यस्य eternal; शरीरिणः of the soul; इमे (all) these; देहाः bodies; अन्तवन्तः perishable; उक्ताः (are) spoken of; तस्मात् therefore; भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; युध्यस्व fight.

All these bodies pertaining to the imperishable, indefinable and eternal soul are spoken of as perishable; therefore, Arjuna, fight. (18)

The word 'Dehāḥ' (bodies), qualified by 'Ime' (these), in the above verse, denotes all bodies, and in order to explain what is 'unreal', they have been characterized as perishable. The intention is to show that the mind, the senses and the gross or physical body—all these are perishable. Just as the body and the world pertaining to a dream appear without any corresponding reality, even so all these bodies, though unreal appear as real through ignorance. They have no real existence. Their destruction is therefore inevitable, so that it is futile to grieve for them.

By using the plural form in the word 'Dehāḥ' and the singular form in 'Śarīriṇaḥ'

(soul), the Lord has shown that in all bodies the soul is one. Due to Nescience, the soul appears as varied in different bodies. But in reality, it is one. The word 'Śarīriṇaḥ, refers to that which has been mentioned in the preceding verse as 'real', and by which the entire world of Matter is said to be pervaded; and the three adjectives, 'eternal', 'imperishable' and 'indefinable,' have been used with reference to it in order to prove its identity with that 'real', and by calling it 'Śarīrī', possessor of the body, and showing its relation with the different bodies, the identity between the soul and God has been demonstrated. The purpose is to show that though in practical experience it appears that different souls are acting within, and holding the different bodies, as a matter of fact, they are not different, but one reality, the one principle of life and consciousness. This can be understood by the analogy of a dream, where none but the dreamer is existent and all the diversities observed are but part of the dream, and after awakening, the dreamer alone remains. Even so, the diversities observed in the world are caused by Nescience. After the dawning of Knowledge, all diversities cease.

By using the word 'Tasmāt' indicative of cause, and then commanding Arjuna to fight, the Lord has shown that when it was proved that the body was perishable and its destruction inevitable, and the soul was eternal and could never be destroyed, there remained no cause for the least grief. Therefore, Arjuna should no longer show any form of hesitation or unwillingness to engage himself in the fight.

In the preceding verse the Lord commanded Arjuna to fight, showing the soul to be eternal and changeless; but no clear light was thrown by Him on the problem raised by Arjuna when he said, "I do not want to kill them; it would be better for me if the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra killed me." Therefore, in the next verse He deals with that problem, saying that it was nothing but ignorance to think that the soul was capable of killing or was killed.

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम्।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते॥ १९॥*

यः who; एनम् this (soul); हन्तारम् capable of killing; वेत्ति knows; च and; यः who; एनम् this (soul); हतम् killed; मन्यते regards; उभौ both; तौ these; न not; विजानीतः know; अयम् this (soul) न neither; हन्ति kills; न nor; हन्यते is killed.

They are both ignorant, he who knows the soul to be capable of killing and he who takes it was killed; for verily the soul neither kills, nor is killed. (19)

The separation of the astral body from the gross body is called 'death', It is the gross body that meets with death; therefore, in the preceding verse it was stated that "all these bodies are perishable." Even so the body plus mind and intellect, through whose agency the life of another gross body is terminated, is called a 'killer'. In this way the killer also is a body, and not the soul. But ignorant men, attributing the function of a body to the soul, regard the soul to be a killer—an agent (vide III.27); that is why they have to reap the bitter fruit of such actions.

* Compare the following verse of the Kaṭhopaniṣad (I. ii. 19):—
हन्ता चेन्मन्यते हन्तुँ हतश्चेन्मन्यते हतम् । उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायँ हन्ति न हन्यते ॥

The preceding verse says that the soul cannot be killed by anybody. The question, therefore, arises: how is it that the soul can not be killed ? In answer to this, showing that the soul is not subject to any form of modification, the Lord brings out the character the soul:—

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे॥ २०॥

अयम् this (soul); न neither; कदाचित् ever; जायते is born; न nor; म्रियते dies; न वा nor (again); भूत्वा after being born; भूयः only then; भविता comes into being; अयम् this (soul); अजः (is) unborn; नित्यः eternal; शाश्वतः everlasting; पुराणः ancient; शरीरे हन्यमाने with the destruction of the body; न not; हन्यते is slain.

The soul is never born nor dies; nor does it become only after being born. For it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and ancient; even though the body is slain, the soul is not. (20)

By saying, ''the soul is never born nor dies,'' and negating thereby the two modifications of birth and death, the Lord negates, in effects, all the six modifications in the soul, and then uses other expressions also to negate the other modifications.

The six modifications are: (1) Birth, (2) Becoming, (3) Growth, (4) Transformation, (5) Decay and (6) Destruction. By declaring the soul as 'unborn,' the modification of birth has been negated of it. The sentence 'nor does it become only on being born' negates the second modification of 'becoming'; the term 'ancient' negates the third modification of 'growth'; the term 'everlasting' negates 'transformation'; the term 'eternal' negates 'decay'; and the sentence 'even though the body is slain, the soul is not', negates the last modification of 'destruction'.

In verse 19 the Lord stated that the soul neither kills anybody, nor is killed by anybody. In that connection showing in verse 20 that the soul is above modification, it has been made clear why it is not killed by anybody. In the next verse, it is shown why the soul does not kill anybody.

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम्।
कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम्॥ २१॥

पार्थ O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; यः who; एनम् this (soul); अविनाशिनम् imperishable; नित्यम् eternal; अजम् unborn; अव्ययम् (and) free from decay; वेद knows; सः that; पुरुषः man; कथम् how; कम् whom; घातयति causes to be killed; कम् (and) whom; हन्ति kills.

Arjuna, the man who knows this soul to be imperishable, eternal and free from birth and decay,—how and whom will he cause to be killed, how and whom will he kill ? (21)

In this verse the Lord has brought out the idea that he who knows the true nature of the soul can never think that he can kill anyone, or cause anyone to be killed. In other words, when he knows that it is the body which is killed by another body conjoined with the mind, intellect and senses,—how can he identify himself with

the body and believe that he has killed anyone, or caused anyone to be killed ? For in his consciousness there remains only one Spirit existent everywhere, which neither dies nor can be killed, and which again neither kills nor causes anyone to be killed. Therefore, all these actions of being subjected to death, infliction of death on another, or becoming the cause of another's death etc., are attributed to the soul due to ignorance. In reality, they have nothing to do with the soul. Therefore, grieving for any being whatsoever does not stand to reason.

True, the soul is eternal and imperishable—it can never be killed; therefore, it should not be grieved for. And the body, being perishable, must perish; hence the body too should not be grieved for. But when a soul leaves one body and enters another, the process involves excessive pain. How, then, is it unreasonable to grieve for such a painful event ? Anticipating this question the Lords says:—

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ २२ ॥

यथा: as; **नरः** a man; **जीर्णानि** worn-out; **वासांसि** garments; **विहाय** discarding; **अपराणि** other; **नवानि** new ones; **गृह्णाति** takes; **तथा** likewise; **देही** the embodied soul; **जीर्णानि** worn-out; **शरीराणि** bodies; **विहाय** casting off; **अन्यानि** other; **नवानि** new ones; **संयाति** enters.

As a man shedding worn-out garments, takes other new ones, likewise the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others which are new. (22)

From a superficial view, the illustration may appear to be somewhat inappropriate, and not on all fours with the fact sought to be illustrated. For generally one feels a sort of gratification in leaving off worn-out clothes and adopting new ones, while the process of casting off an old body and entering into another entails suffering and pain. A deeper consideration, however, will show that the illustration is not inappropriate. For in casting off an old body and entering into a new one, it is the ignorant alone who suffers pain, not the wise. A child weeps when its mother removes old clothes, soiled with dirt, from its body, and compels it to wear new ones. The mother remains indifferent to the weeping of the child and in the child's own interest makes it submit to the change of clothes. Even so God, for the good of the Jīva, and caring little for its tears, changes its body when it is worn-out.

In this context, the wearing-out of a body should be construed to mean expiry of the duration of its life. If the word 'worn-out' is interpreted in the sense of 'old', it will raise a difficulty inasmuch as people do not in every case die old. Men and women in their youth, and even infants, are very often found to enter the portals of death. On the termination of its 'Prārabdha' (the sum-total of Karmas bearing fruit in one life), a being may die at any age, no matter whether it is old age, youth or infancy; and that will be considered the limit of its life. The wearing-out of a body should therefore be taken to mean the exhaustion of the force of Prārabdha, which has been responsible for building it. Taken in this sense, the adjective 'Jīrṇāni' (worn-out) applied to the noun 'bodies' is quite appropriate.

On the analogy of 'Vāsāṁsi' (clothes) use of the plural form in Śarīrāṇi' (bodies) also has been made after due thought and

consideration. There may be two reasons for the use of the plural form in this case:—

(a) There is no knowing how many bodies a particular Jīvātmā has cast off up till now, how many it has taken anew, and how many more it will continue hereafter to cast off and adopt, till it obtains enlightenment and consequent release from birth and death. This is indicated by the plural form applied in this context.

(b) Every individual soul possesses three bodies:—the gross, subtle and causal. When the Jīvātmā leaves one body and enters into another, all these three bodies are changed. The actions of a man are responsible for the modification of his nature or disposition. The causal body is represented by one's individual nature made up of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas or the principles of harmony, motion and inertia. This is also known as disposition or temperament. Generally speaking, it is one's nature which determines the last thought at the time of death, and according to that last thought or desire the subtle body is formed. The Jīvātmā leaves a worn-out body carrying the subtle and causal bodies with it, and enters into a new gross body suited to the subtle body. Thus it was quite reasonable to use the plural form of the word to indicate the change that takes place in all the three bodies—gross, subtle and causal.

In reality the soul, being immobile and non-active, does not migrate from one body to another; it is ever fixed and steady. But just as when a pot is carried from one place to another, the ether or space within the pot also appears to be carried, even so when the subtle body leaves a gross body and enters another, it appears that the soul also has moved from one body to another. Therefore, the acts of leaving one body and entering into another are attributed to the soul in order to explain the phenomenon of death to the ordinary people. The word 'Dehī' is indicative of the soul identifying itself with the body; due to its association with gross body, it appears to be leaving one and entering into another. In this sense, it has been said that the soul leaves a worn-out body and enters into a new one.

In this verse, two different verbs 'Gṛhṇāti' and 'Saṁyāti' have been used respectively with reference to the two objects 'clothes' and 'bodies'. The primary sense of 'Gṛhṇāti' is 'to take' and that of 'Saṁyāti' is 'to go'. Clothes are taken and worn, therefore the verb 'Gṛhṇāti' has been used with reference to them; and the soul appears to leave a body and enter into another, therefore the verb 'Saṁyāti' has been used with reference to it.

Similarly, the use of the two words 'Naraḥ' (man) and 'Dehī' (living creature) in this verse has a special significance, inasmuch as clothes are worn and discarded by men alone, and not by other beings, but migration from one body to another holds good in the case of all beings. Therefore, the word 'Naraḥ' (man) has been used while speaking of clothes, and the word 'Dehī' (embodied being) while speaking of bodies.

Proving it unreasonable to grieve over the process of leaving one body and adopting another the Lord reverts in the next three verses to a discussion, in an indirect way, of the eternal and changeless character of the soul, because of the difficulty in understanding this character, and proves that grieving for fear of its destruction was unbecoming and improper.

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः॥ २३॥

एनम् this (soul); शस्त्राणि weapons; न not; छिन्दन्ति cut; एनम् this (soul); पावकः fire (lit., that which purifies); न not; दहति burns; एनम् this (soul); आपः water; न not; क्लेदयन्ति wet; च and; मारुतः wind; न not; शोषयति dries.

Weapons cannot cut it nor can fire burn it; water cannot wet it nor can wind dry it. (23)

Arjuna's grief proceeded out of the apprehension that he would be required to kill his elders and other relations by striking them with lethal weapons, or by hurling destructive weapons against them; therefore, in order to remove his grief, the Lord establishes the immortality and formlessness of the soul by pointing out the inability of all the four elements of earth, water, fire and air to destroy it. He shows that even when the body is cut to pieces by weapons, the soul is not. Destructive fire-missiles may burn the body, but the soul will not be burnt, the Vāruṇāstra (weapon of water) may be applied to dissolve the body, but the soul will not be 'dissolved thereby; the weapon of air (Vāyavyāstra) may dry up the body, but the soul will not be dried up. The body is perishable and possessed of a form; the soul is everlasting and formless. Therefore, the soul can never be destroyed by the element of earth in the form of any weapon or by the elements of water, fire and air.

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च।
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः॥ २४॥

अयम् this (soul); अच्छेद्यः (is) incapable of being cut; अयम् this (soul); अदाह्यः (is) incapable of being burnt; अक्लेद्यः incapable of being dissolved in water; च and; अशोष्यः undriable; एव as well; अयम् this (soul); नित्यः (is) eternal; सर्वगतः omnipresent; स्थाणुः immovable; अचलः constant; सनातनः (and) everlasting.

For this soul is incapable of being cut; it is proof against fire, impervious to water and undriable as well. This soul is eternal, omnipresent, immovable, constant and everlasting. (24)

The present verse has been added by the Lord to show by argument why the soul cannot be destroyed by weapons. It is indivisible, unmanifest, constant and immutable; therefore weapons are altogether powerless to destroy it.

When it is said that the soul is incapable of being cut and burnt by fire etc., the indestructibility of the soul is no doubt established; but these tests equally apply to ether as well; for being the cause of all other elements and pervading them all, it cannot be cut by weapons, which are products of the earth, nor can it be burnt by fire, nor dissolved by water, nor again can it be dried by air. In order to show that the indestructibility of the soul is totally different from that of ether, the soul is called eternal, omnipresent and everlasting. The intention of this is to show that ether is not eternal, because during the final dissolution of creation it is dissolved; whereas the soul never ceases to be, therefore it is eternal. Then ether is not all-pervasive, it pervades only its own evolutes; but the soul is all-pervasive. Again, ether has a beginning; but the soul is without beginning. Thus by the use of these last adjectives the difference between the soul and ether has been clearly brought out.

By describing the soul as 'still' and

'motionless', it has been shown that both forms of motion represented by vibration and movement from one place to another are absent in it. Motion which takes place when the thing is rooted to a fixed place is known as 'vibration', whereas motion in the form of change of place is termed as its movement from one place to another. The soul neither vibrates, nor moves from one place to another. It Is all-pervasive: there is no place which is not filled by it.

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २५ ॥

अयम् this (soul); अव्यक्तः (is) unmanifest; अयम् this (soul); अचिन्त्यः (is) unthinkable; अयम् (and) this (soul); अविकार्यः (is) immutable; उच्यते is spoken of; तस्मात् therefore; एनम् this (soul); एवम् as such; विदित्वा knowing; अनुशोचितुम् to grieve; न अर्हसि you ought not.

This soul is unmanifest; it is unthinkable; and it is spoken of as immutable. Therefore, knowing this as such, you should not grieve. (25)

The soul cannot be cognized by any of the senses, therefore it is called 'unmanifest', nor can it be conceived by the mind, therefore it is 'unthinkable'.

Again, by describing it as 'immutable', the distinction between the soul and Prakṛti has been emphasized. The intention of this is to show that all the senses as well as the mind are evolutes of Prakṛti; they cannot therefore apprehend Prakṛti, which is their cause. Therefore, like the soul, Prakṛti too is unmanifest and unthinkable. But Prakṛti is not immutable, it is subject to change, whereas the soul undergoes no transformation in any circumstance. Thus the soul is something entirely different from Prakṛti. When the soul is realized as eternal, omnipresent, immovable, everlasting, unmanifest, unthinkable and immutable, as described above, grieving for it becomes quite out of place and unreasonable.

In the above verses, describing the soul as unborn and imperishable the Lord demonstrated that it was unreasonable to grieve for it. In the next two verses He shows that it is improper to grieve for it, even if it be assumed that it is subject to birth and death:—

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैवं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २६ ॥

च and; अथ if; एनम् this (soul); नित्यजातम् subject to constant birth; वा and; नित्यम् constantly; मृतम् dying; मन्यसे you regard; तथा in that case; अपि too; महाबाहो O Arjuna, of mighty arms; त्वम् you; एवम् in this way; शोचितुम् to grieve; न अर्हसि ought not.

And, Arjuna, if you should suppose this soul to be subject to constant birth and death, even then you should not grieve like this. (26)

The two indeclinables 'Atha', and "Ca',, in the above verse, are indicative of assumption. By the other words which follow them the Lord has tried to show that although, in reality, the soul is not subject to birth and death, nevertheless, if Arjuna took it to be such, that is, if he held that it was constantly born whenever it was

united with a body, and that similarly it constantly died whenever it was disunited from a body, then, according to that line of thought as well, it was unreasonable for Arjuna to grieve for it as he did in verses 28 to 47 of the first chapter.

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि॥ २७॥

हि because (in that case); जातस्य for the born; मृत्युः death; ध्रुवः (is) certain; च and; मृतस्य for the death; जन्म rebirth; ध्रुवम् (is) inevitable; तस्मात् therefore; अपरिहार्ये अर्थे over an inevitable event; त्वम् you; शोचितुम् to grieve; न अर्हसि ought not.

For in that case death is certain for the born, and rebirth is inevitable for the dead. You should not, therefore, grieve over the inevitable. (27)

The indeclinable 'Hi', in this verse, has been used to denote cause. The present verse pursues the line of thought of the previous verse, and re-emphasizes the same conclusion by cogent argument.

Here the Lord does not state the actual truth. He only recapitulates the point of view of those ignorant men who hold the soul to be constantly taking birth and constantly dying. According to this school of thought, every mortal is bound to be reborn; for this school does not believe in liberation. In the true doctrine, which upholds the idea of liberation, the soul is not regarded as subject to birth and death, which are conceived in ignorance only.

The word 'Tasmāt', again, is indicative of cause. By using the expression "over the inevitable" along with it, it has been shown that according to this view there being no escape from birth and death, no possibility of alteration in or deviation from that course of events, it was useless to grieve over it. Therefore, from this point of view as well, it was improper for Arjuna to indulge in grief.

The verses going before have shown that it was unreasonable and improper to grieve both from the point of view of those who regard the soul as eternal, unborn and imperishable, as well as of those who regard it as constantly subject to birth and death. Now, the next verse shows that grief with reference even to the gross bodies of beings cannot be justified by reason.

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना॥ २८॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; भूतानि (all) beings; अव्यक्तादीनि (were) unmanifest before birth; अव्यक्तनिधनानि (and) will become unmanifest at death; व्यक्तमध्यानि (they are) manifest in the interim (between birth and death); एव only; तत्र under such circumstances; का what; परिदेवना (cause for) lamentation.

Arjuna, before birth beings are not manifest to our human senses; at death they return to the unmanifest again. They are manifest only in the interim between birth and death. What occasion, then, for lamentation ? (28)

The word 'Bhūtāni' in this verse stands for beings in general. By applying to it the adjective 'Avyaktādīni' it has been shown that before birth they had no connection

with their present bodies, By the word 'Avyaktanidhanāni', it has been shown that in the end, that is, after death too they would maintain no connection with these gross bodies. The word 'Vyaktamadhyāni' expresses the idea that during the intermediate period alone, viz., from birth to death, they are manifest and maintain relation with their bodies.

By the words "What occasion, then, for lamentation?" the Lord intends to say that just as the dream world is non-existent before and after the dream, it is during the dream alone that the dreamer has a semblance of relation with it, even so one has no cause to lament for bodies with which one is connected only during the intermediate stage, and not permanently. In the *Mahābhārata, Strī-Parva,* Chapter 2, Vidura also gives expression to a similar sentiment:—

"Those whom you now regard to be your own, came from an unseen state, that is, before birth they were unmanifest, and they have become unmanifest again. Therefore, in reality, neither are they yours, nor are you theirs. What is the occasion, then, for lamentation ?"*

Being extremely hard to understand, the Lord described the nature of the soul in the above verses, in diverse ways, in order to make Arjuna understand the truth about it. Now in the next verse He shows the difficulty and marvellous nature of perception, description and hearing of that truth.

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेनमाश्चर्यवद्वदति तथैव चान्यः।
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित्॥ २९ ॥†

कश्चित् hardly anyone; **एनम्** This (soul); **आश्चर्यवत्** as marvellous; **पश्यति** perceives; **च** and; **तथा** so; **एव** even; **अन्यः** (scarce) another; **आश्चर्यवत्** as marvellous; **वदति** speaks (of it); **च** and; **अन्यः** (scarce) another; **एनम्** this (soul); **आश्चर्यवत्** as marvellous; **शृणोति** hears (of it); **च** and; **कश्चित्** (there are) some; **श्रुत्वा** on hearing (of it); **अपि** even; **एनम्** this (soul); **न** not; **वेद** know; **एव** indeed.

Hardly anyone perceives this soul as marvellous, scarce another likewise speaks thereof as marvellous, and scarce another hears of it as marvellous; while there are some who know it not even on hearing of it. (29)

By saying 'Hardly anyone perceives this soul as marvellous,' the Lord intends to show that the soul is something wonderful, so that the individual who succeeds in perceiving it is very rare to meet with in this world, and when that individual perceives the soul he sees it as something marvellous. The soul is not perceived even as worldly objects are objectively perceived through the senses, mind and intellect. This vision is

* अदर्शनादापतिताः पुनश्चादर्शनं गताः। नैते तव न तेषां त्वं तत्र का परिदेवना ॥

† There is a Mantra in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, containing almost the same ideas, which runs as follows:—

श्रवणायापि बहुभिर्यो न लभ्यः शृण्वन्तोऽपि बहवो यं न विद्युः।
आश्चर्यो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्धाऽऽश्चर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्टः॥ (I.ii.7)

"That (truth about the soul) which many are not privileged even to hear, and which though heard cannot be known in reality by many, the expounder of it also is marvellous. The man of exceptional parts, succeeding in realizing it, is also very rare: and its knower also is a marvellous individual, instructed by an exceptionally able and proficient teacher."

transcendental and unique. When nothing but the soul exists in the consciousness of a man, the soul perceives itself by itself. During this perception the seer, the act of seeing and the object of sight cannot be differentiated. Therefore, that seeing is marvellous.

By the words ''scarce another likewise speaks thereof as marvellous,'' the Lord shows that all great souls who have realized the self cannot describe the character of the soul, so as to make others understand it. Those exalted souls alone who have fully realized the truth about God and are well-versed in the Vedas and other scriptures can describe the soul, and their description too is marvellous. That is to say, the character of the soul cannot be described even as an object of the world is described, so as to convey to another a correct impression of the same. This description is transcendental and wonderful in character.

All the illustrations employed to expound the character of the soul throw light only on a partial aspect of the soul. None of them brings out its character fully. There being no object in the world analogous to the soul, nothing can illustrate it fully. Nevertheless, realized souls indicate its character by many a marvellous hint, following both the positive and negative methods; this is what is meant by 'speaking of the soul as marvellous.' In reality the soul, being outside the range of speech, cannot be definitely and clearly described in words.

''Scarce another hears of it as marvellous'': by these words the Lord shows that among masses of men, he who takes interest in hearing the description of the soul and is possessed of virtuous conduct, purity of heart, reverence as well as faith in God is indeed very rare, and his hearing too is marvellous. That is to say, objects of the world which he formerly considered as real, attractive and embodying happiness, and the physical body etc., which he regarded as his very self, he now hears of as transient, perishable, embodiments of sorrow and material in character, and of the soul as something quite different from them; this fills him with wonder. For the truth about the soul is something which he had never heard of or understood before, and it bears no affinity with any worldly object; hence its description sounds to him as something very strange. Moreover, he listens to it with rapt and undivided attention and is bewitched as it were to hear it. This is what is meant by 'hearing of it as marvellous.'

'By saying there are some who know it not even on hearing of it', the Lord intends to show that one who is not endowed with full reverence and faith, and lacks purity of mind and subtlety of intellect, will fail to grasp the true nature of the soul even on hearing of it, owing to doubt and lurking misconception. Hence, it is most difficult for an unqualified soul to understand this truth.

The word 'Āścaryavat' should be taken as an adverb qualifying the verbs 'perceives', 'speaks' and 'hears'. In this sense it can be understood as qualifying the subject and object as well.

Describing thus the difficulty and marvellous nature of perception, description and hearing of the truth about the soul, the Lord now concludes the treatment of Sāṅkhyayoga, or the Yoga of knowledge, by advising Arjuna in the next verse that the soul being ever incapable of being slain, he should not grieve for any being whatsoever.

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत।
तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ ३० ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; सर्वस्य of all; देहे (residing) in the bodies; अयम् this; देही soul; नित्यम् ever; अवध्यः (is) incapable of being slain; तस्मात् therefore; त्वम् you; सर्वाणि all; भूतानि beings; शोचितुम् to grieve for; न अर्हसि ought not.

Arjuna, this soul dwelling in the bodies of all can never be slain; therefore, you should not mourn for anyone. (30)

Saying "this soul residing in the bodies of all can never be slain," the Lord shows that in the bodies of all beings of the world, there resides but one soul. The diversity of bodies is reflected in the soul due to ignorance; in reality there is no diversity in the soul. And this ultimate reality, the soul, can never be slain; it can never be destroyed by anybody by any means whatsoever.

In the sentence "Therefore, it does not behove you to grieve for any being," the use of the word 'Therefore', which is indicative of cause, is intended to show that it being definitely demonstrated and proved in this chapter that the soul is ever imperishable, and it being beyond anybody's power to kill it, Arjuna should not grieve for anybody. How can there be any occasion for grief when the soul can never cease to exist at any time, nor can it be destroyed by any means ? Therefore, instead of indulging in grief, Arjuna should prepare himself for the fight.

Having demonstrated so for, from the point of view of Sāṅkhyayoga, the unity and the eternal and imperishable character of the soul, which is everlasting, stainless, enlightened, impartial, changeless and a non-doer, and declaring the body to be perishable, it has been proved that it is unreasonable to lament either for the soul or for the body, or, for the matter of that, for the separation of the soul from the body. Incidentally it has also been shown that even if the soul be regarded as subject to birth and death, grieving for it does not stand to reason, and Arjuna is, therefore, commanded to fight. Now, in the next seven verses, the Lord proceeds to demonstrate that it was unreasonable to grieve even according to the code of honour laid down for a Kṣatriya; hence Arjuna is again encourged to enter the fight.

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते॥ ३१॥

च and; स्वधर्मम् your own duty; अपि too; अवेक्ष्य considering; विकम्पितुम् to waver; न not; अर्हसि you ought; हि for; क्षत्रियस्य for a man of the warrior class; धर्म्यात् युद्धात् than a righteous war; श्रेयः more welcome; अन्यत् any other thing; न not; विद्यते exists.

Besides; considering your own duty too you should not waver; for there is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class than a righteous war. (31)

In the sentence "Besides, considering your own duty too you should not waver," the use of the word 'too' is intended to show that apart from the fact that the soul being immortal, and the body transient, lamentation for them, or shrinking from fight, did not stand to reason, Arjuna should not entertain any fear even if he considered the problem from the point of view of his own duty as a member of the warrior class; for it was the natural duty of a Kṣatriya not to run away from battle (*vide* XVIII.43).

The indeclinable 'Hi' is indicative of cause. The use of this word is intended to

show that the apology for the above exhortation follows in the second half of the verse, which says that there is nothing more welcome for a Kṣatriya than a righteous war. Here the Lord shows that a war which has been launched not from any wicked motive or out of greed, in which no injustice is perpetrated, but which is conducted in conformity with the laws of morality (Dharma), and which devolves on one as a matter of duty, and has been waged for upholding equity and justice;—such a war alone is, to a member of the Kṣatriya class, more conducive to spiritual good than any other form and aspect of Dharma. There is no better, and no more fruitful Dharma to a Kṣatriya than participation in such a war; for a Kṣatriya who carries on a righteous war by righteous means can very easily attain heaven or even liberation.

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम्।
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥ ३२ ॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; **सुखिनः** happy; **क्षत्रियाः** Kṣatriyas (only); **यदृच्छया** of its own accord; **उपपन्नम्** (that has); **अपावृतम् स्वर्गद्वारम्** an open door to heaven; **ईदृशम्** such; **युद्धम्** (an opportunity for) war; **लभन्ते** get.

Arjuna, happy are the Kṣatriyas who get such an unsolicited opportunity for war; which opens the door to heaven. (32)

In this verse, addressing Arjuna as 'Pārtha', the Lord reminds him of the message of Arjuna's mother, Pṛthā, also known as Kuntī, which the Lord had carried from Hastināpura. The message ran as follows:—

''Please tell Arjuna, and Bhīma, who ever keep themselves ready to fight, that the occasion looking forward to which a Kṣatriya mother begets a son has arrived.*''

Speaking of the war as an 'unsolicited opportunity', the Lord wants to bring home to Arjuna that it was not of their own seeking that they were faced with that crisis. The Pāṇḍavas had tried all possible means to bring about an amicable settlement, but Duryodhana had turned down the proposal of returning without the arbitrament of war the kingdom of the Pāṇḍavas kept under Duryodhana's charge as a trust. He had clearly declared that he would not give the Pāṇḍavas even as much land as could be covered by the point of a pin (*Mahā., Udyoga.*, 127.25).† It was then that the Pāṇḍavas were forced to make preparations for war; therefore, so far as the Pāṇḍavas were concerned, it was an 'unsolicited war'. By declaring this war as 'an open door to heaven', it has been pointed out that a warrior meeting his death in such a righteous war obtained direct access to heaven, and that nothing could hinder him on the way to heaven.

By the sentence ''Happy are the Kṣatriyas who get such an opportunity'', it is shown that every Kṣatriya does not come across such a righteous war. It is only the most fortunate among the Kṣatriyas who are brought face to face with such a war as a matter of duty. It was Arjuna's great luck that he could get the opportunity of engaging himself in such a righteous war without his seeking. He should, therefore, in no case think of turning away from it.

* एतद्धनञ्जयो वाच्यो नित्योद्युक्तो वृकोदरः । यदर्थं क्षत्रिया सूते तस्य कालोऽयमागतः॥
(*Mahā., Udyoga.*, 137.9-10)

† यावद्धि तीक्ष्णया सूच्या विध्येदग्रेण केशव। तावदप्यपरित्याज्यं भूमेर्नः पाण्डवान् प्रति॥

Bringing out the advantage of participation in such a righteous war, the Lord shows in the next verse the harm that would follow if Arjuna refused to participate in it.

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं सङ्ग्रामं न करिष्यसि।
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि॥ ३३॥

अथ again; चेत् if; त्वम् you; इमम् this; धर्म्यम् righteous; सङ्ग्रामम् war; न not; करिष्यसि will wage; ततः then; स्वधर्मम् your duty; च and; कीर्तिम् reputation; हित्वा falling from; पापम् sin; अवाप्स्यसि you will incur.

Now, if you refuse to fight this righteous war, then, shirking your duty and losing your reputation, you will incur sin. (33)

The word 'Atha' in this verse is intended to introduce another viewpoint. It shows that the verse will prove the advisability of Arjuna's participation in the battle from another point of view.

In the above two verses the Lord had made it amply clear to Arjuna that the war with which Arjuna found himself faced being a righteous war, it was Arjuna's duty to participate in it. The Lord now proceeds to tell him that if, in spite of that, he withdrew from the fight he would be guilty of falling from his 'Svadharma', or the allotted duty of a Kṣatriya, and the world-wide fame he had acquired by attaining victory in fight over demons like the Nivātakavacas etc., and by his engagement with Bhagavān Śiva, would be utterly destroyed and lost. Over and above that, neglect in the performance of an obligatory duty would make him guilty of sin. Therefore, fear of sin, which he advanced as his reason for withdrawal from the fight, and his nervousness and fright, were wholly unjustified and inopportune.

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम्।
सम्भावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते॥ ३४॥

च nay; भूतानि people; ते your; अव्ययाम् undying; अकीर्तिम् ill-fame; अपि also; कथयिष्यन्ति will spread; च and; सम्भावितस्य for one enjoying popular esteem; अकीर्तिः infamy; मरणात् than death; अतिरिच्यते is worse.

Nay, people will also pour undying infamy on you; and infamy brought on a man enjoying popular esteem is worse than death. (34)

Use of the adverb 'also' in the sentence "People will also pour undying infamy on you" shows that withdrawal from the fight would not only make Arjuna fall from his duty, lose his reputation and expose him to sin; but the celestials, Ṛṣis and all people of the earth would speak ill of him in many ways. And that infamy would not be slight in character and short of duration, but would be everlasting. Therefore, the thought of withdrawing from the fight was wholly unjustified for him.

By the words "Infamy brought on a man enjoying popular esteem is worse than death", the Lord seeks to show that if Arjuna came to the conclusion that he would stand to lose nothing by public infamy, that would not be the right conclusion for him. For to a man enjoying wide fame, as well as the love and esteem of the people, loss of credit and honour is more painful than even death. Therefore, when confronted with such infamy, he would fail to resign himself

to it; for he was reputed throughout the world as a hero and a great man, and his fame had spread far and wide, from heaven to the nether worlds.

भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥ ३५ ॥

च and; येषाम् by whom; बहुतमः held in high esteem; भूत्वा being; त्वम् you; लाघवम् smallness; यास्यसि will attain; महारथाः (those) great warrior-chiefs; त्वाम् you; भयात् out of fear; रणात् from battle; उपरतम् (as) having desisted; मंस्यन्ते will regard.

And the warrior-chiefs who thought highly of you, will now despise you, thinking that it was fear which drove you from battle. (35)

By saying that "the warrior-chiefs who thought highly of Arjuna will begin to despise him", the Lord means to bring out that great warriors like Bhīṣma, Droṇa and Śalya etc., on the one hand, and Virāṭa, Drupada, Sātyaki and Dhṛṣṭadyumna etc., on the other, who had all along held Arjuna in very high esteem, and regarded him as a great hero, a great warrior and a virtuous man, would begin to think lightly of him, if Arjuna ran away from the battle.

Raising the question of 'fear' in this context, it has been attempted to bring home to Arjuna's mind that, if he desisted from battle, the Mahārathīs would never think that the motive of his doing so was either pity and compassion for his relations, or any conviction that war was a sin. They would naturally jump to the conclusion that 'fear' was the real motive, and would think that Arjuna ran away from the battle in order to save his life. Such being the position, to desist from battle in that state would be the height of indiscretion on Arjuna's part.

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून्वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।
निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥ ३६ ॥

च and; तव your; अहिताः enemies; तव your; सामर्थ्यम् might; निन्दन्तः disparaging; बहून् many; अवाच्यवादान् unbecoming words; वदिष्यन्ति will speak; ततः than this; दुःखतरम् more distressing; नु indeed; किम् what (can there be).

And your enemies, disparaging your might, will speak many unbecoming words; what can be more distressing than this ? (36)

Verse 34 referred to the 'infamy' that would be permanently indulged in by the people in general, while this verse speaks of the words of reproach that would be uttered by enemies like Duryodhana to Arjuna's face. Public scandal and infamy cause acute sorrow and distress to men of honour and position alone, not to all. But words of reproach and denunciation uttered by an enemy directly to one's face cause extreme pain even to ordinary men. Therefore, the Lord points out that loss of fame throughout the world and impairment of prestige among friends who held him in high regard as a hero were not the only form of injury from which Arjuna would suffer, but enemies like Duryodhana, who were ever bent on doing him mischief, and derived pleasure from injury caused to him, would now come forward to denounce his prowess, might and skill in battle, and would shower many disparaging and

unbecoming words on him. They would proclaim from house-tops that Arjuna was no warrior, and had been a eunuch from his very birth, and would reproach his Gāṇḍīva bow, and his prowess !

Pointing out that there could be nothing more distressing than that, the Lord wanted to expose the fallacy of Arjuna's view that his happiness lay in desisting from battle, and that participation in it would bring him sorrow. The Lord sought to make it clear by these arguments that desisting from battle would prove to be the greatest source of misery to him.

Advancing thus far many reasons to demonstrate the various forms of loss that would accrue from non-participation in the battle, the Lord now proceeds to show the advantages that would follow from participation in the battle, both from the point of view of this world and of the next, and commands Arjuna to prepare himself for the fight.

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम्।
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः॥ ३७॥

वा either; **हतः** slain (in battle); **स्वर्गम्** heaven; **प्राप्स्यसि** you will win; **वा** or; **जित्वा** conquering; **महीम्** (sovereignty of) the earth; **भोक्ष्यसे** you will enjoy; **तस्मात्** therefore; **कौन्तेय** O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; **युद्धाय** for the fight; **कृतनिश्चयः** determined; **उत्तिष्ठ** stand up.

Die, and you will win heaven; conquer, and you enjoy sovereignty of the earth; therefore, stand up, Arjuna, determined to fight. (37)

In verse 6 of this chapter, Arjuna had given expression to the confusion of his mind by saying that he did not know which was preferable for him, to fight or not to fight; nor did he know whether he would win the battle, or would be conquered by the Kauravas. With reference to that statement of Arjuna, the Lord shows in this verse that whether he is killed in action on the battle-field, or attains victory, he will stand to win both ways, and thus proves that participation in battle was the best course for Arjuna. That is to say, if the fight resulted in a victory for the Kauravas, and Arjuna met his death on the battle-field, he would not be a loser in asmuch as such death itself would be a direct passport to heaven. And if, on the other hand, the crown of victory went to him, he would enjoy undisputed sovereignty over the earth. From both these points of view, participation in the war was the most expedient course. Therefore, Arjuna was exhorted to arise, shaking off his faint-heartedness, and take up his position on the chariot, determined to fight.

In the preceding verse, the Lord declared rulership over earth or the attainment of heaven as the reward of participating in the war; but Arjuna had stated before that he did not want to destroy his race even for the sovereignty of the three worlds, not to speak of rulership over the earth. Therefore, the next verse shows how one who does not hanker either for the pleasures of kingship or of heaven, should engage himself in a fight as a matter of duty.

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि॥ ३८॥

जयाजयौ victory and defeat; लाभालाभौ gain and loss; सुखदुःखे pleasure and pain; समे कृत्वा treating alike; ततः then; युद्धाय for the battle; युज्यस्व get ready; एवम् (fighting) thus; पापम् sin; न not; अवाप्स्यसि you will incur.

Treating alike victory and defeat, gain and loss, pleasure and pain, get ready for the fight, then; fighting thus you will not incur sin. (38)

To make no distinction in the mind between victory and defeat, gain and loss, and pleasure and pain, that may follow as the result of a fight, that is to say, to have no feeling of attachment and repulsion or joy and grief, in regard to these is what is meant by "treating pleasure and pain etc., alike". By asking Arjuna to get ready for the fight only then, the Lord means to say that if Arjuna had really no desire for the pleasures of kingship or of heaven, he should in that case also wholly abandon the feeling of diversity in regard to the result of a fight, and cultivating thus a feeling of equanimity, he should engage himself in the fight as a matter of duty. A fight conducted in this spirit brings everlasting and supreme peace.

Then the Lord points out that if Arjuna fought in that spirit, he would not be guilty of sin. This is in reply to Arjuna's argument advanced in Chapter I in favour of desisting from battle, viz., that slaughter of kinsmen would involve him in sin (I.36, 39, 45). Here, in clear words, the Lord shows that if Arjuna participated in the battle, treating pleasure and pain, victory and defeat etc. alike, that is, cultivating an attitude of indifference towards the result of the battle, he would not be touched by the slightest trace of sin, and would also be released from the bondage of actions in the shape of reward and punishment.

Up to this point, the Lord established the propriety of engaging in the fight from the point of view of Sāṅkhyayoga and the duty of a Kṣatriya, and exhorted Arjuna to fight in a spirit of equanimity. Now desiring to establish the same thing from the point of view of Karmayoga, He introduces the subject of Karmayoga in the next verse.

एषा तेऽभिहिता साङ्ख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु।
बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि॥ ३९॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; एषा this; बुद्धिः attitude of mind; ते to you; साङ्ख्ये from the point of view of Jñānayoga; अभिहिता has been presented; तु now; इमाम् the same; योगे (as presented) from the point of view of Karmayoga (the Yoga of selfless action); शृणु hear; यया बुद्ध्या with which attitude of mind; युक्तः equipped; कर्मबन्धम् the shackles of Karma (action); प्रहास्यसि you will be able to throw off completely.

Arjuna, this attitude of mind has been presented to you from the point of view of Jñānayoga; now hear the same as presented from the standpoint of Karmayoga (the Yoga of selfless action). Equipped with this attitude of mind, you will be able to throw off completely the shackles of Karma. (39)

The words 'Eṣā Buddhiḥ' in this verse refer to the spirit of equanimity, cultivating which the Lord advised Arjuna, in the preceding verse, to engage himself in the fight; for 'Eṣā' invariably points to the thing that lies nearest to it. Therefore, when the Lord says that He has presented this attitude of mind from the point of view of Jñānayoga

He means to indicate that from verse 11 to verse 30 above He has shown how through the practice of Jñānayoga the capacity to treat everything and every experience alike could be attained, and how the Jñānayogī, realizing with the help of discrimination the true nature of the soul, should perform in a spirit of equanimity the duties attaching to the order of society and stage in life he is placed in. We shall try to show in the following lines how this spirit of equanimity has been described in the verses referred to above.

The perception by man of difference or diversity in the various objects of this world is due to his ignorance about the true nature of the soul. When through realization of the true nature of the soul, there remains in his view no difference between the soul and Oversoul, and except Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, nothing else exists in his consciousness, it is no longer possible for him to entertain an idea of diversity in that unity. That is why in verse 11 of this chapter the Lord declared that grief for the dead or the living which was due to the idea of diversity rooted in error or ignorance, was wholly improper, and thus gave Arjuna a clear hint to give it up. In verses 12 and 13, showing the eternal and unattached character of the soul, it has been brought out that the distinction observed between the states of life and death was due only to ignorance, and the wise man, possessed of knowledge of the soul, does not make any distinction between them: for the soul is ever the same, changeless and eternal. Thereafter declaring the contacts between the senses and their objects, which gave rise to the idea of diversity through the conflicting feelings of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc., as transient by nature, Arjuna has been advised to ignore them—to maintain and attitude of equanimity in regard to them (II.14); and praising the wise man who treats pleasure and pain alike, the Lord has declared him to be quite eligible for immortality (II.15). Then, defining what is real and what is unreal, and exhorting Arjuna to fight (II.16-18), and declaring those who regarded the soul as capable of killing or being killed as ignorant, and establishing the non-doership, eternity and immutability of the soul, it was proved that the destruction of the body did not bring about the destruction of the soul; and thus it was shown that it did not behove Arjuna to grieve for any being because of distinction between the state of life and death (II.19-30). Thus these verses describe the spirit of equanimity, arising out of a knowledge of the true nature of the soul, reached through discrimination between the real and unreal.

The word 'Imām' also refers to the attitude of equanimity as described in the preceding verse. By saying "now hear the same as presented from the standpoint of Karmayoga", the Lord indicates that He would now proceed to describe in the following verses what this attitude of equanimity meant from the point of view of Karmayoga, how it was cultivated during the practice of Karmayoga, and what was its fruit. Arjuna was therefore requested to hear these ideas with due attention and care.

Verses 31 to 37 were intended to show that Arjuna being a Kṣatriya, it was his duty to fight and hence it was altogether unbecoming of him to desist from battle, and also how both from the point of view of this world and of the next it was advantageous for Arjuna to face the enemy in battle. Again, in verse 38 it was pointed out that when the fight was inevitable, it should be fought in such a way that it might not prove to be the cause of bondage. That is why, both from

the point of view of Jñānayoga and of Karmayoga, the attitude of equanimity has been shown to be necessary and indispensable. The present verse establishes the connection of this attitude of equanimity with both the forms of spiritual discipline, viz., Jñānayoga and Karmayoga, according to what is known in Saṁskrit as the 'देहलीदीपकन्याय' or the 'maxim of the lamp placed over the threshold', which by its peculiar position serves to light the rooms on both the sides.

Jīvātmā or the embodied soul is held in bondage by the latencies of good and evil deeds performed in countless lives, and reaching the human state it again starts it career of fresh deeds under the impulses of egoism, desire and attachment, and gets more and more entangled. By 'shackles of Karma' is meant the total store of accumulated residues of good and evil actions, performed in countless previous lives, which cause the Jīva ever to move in the cycle of births and deaths, not only in the human species, but in other species as well. By renouncing, according, to the principles of Karmayoga, all attachment with Karma, and the desire for its fruit, and treating success and failure alike, that is, freed from the feelings of attachment and repulsion, joy and grief, etc., when one robs one's past and present actions of their capacity to bear fruit,—in other words, when Karma is reduced to the position of a 'fried seed' which does not sprout,—he is said to have "thrown off or destroyed the shackles of Karma" through the cultivation of evenmindedness.

Introducing the subject of Karmayoga in the above verse, the Lord now proceeds to describe the secret of its glory.

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात्॥ ४०॥

इह in this path (of disinterested action); अभिक्रमनाशः loss of effort; न not; अस्ति (there) is; प्रत्यवायः (fear of) contrary result; न not; विद्यते (there) is; अस्य धर्मस्य of this discipline; स्वल्पम् a little; अपि even; महतः भयात् from great fear (of birth and death); त्रायते protects.

In this path (of disinterested action) there is no loss of effort, nor is there fear of contrary result. Even a little practice of this discipline saves one from the terrible fear of birth and death. (40)

If a man, engaged in the pursuit of agriculture, after sowing the seed in his plot of land, fails either to protect it, or to water it, the seed gets destroyed. Unlike this, the practice of Karmayoga, once commenced, is never lost, even if it is abandoned before its completion. This is what is meant by saying "there is no loss of effort in the path of Karmayoga." Impressions of the practice of Karmayoga take root in the mind of the practicant, and compel him in his next birth to resume the thread where it was left (VI. 43-44). The practice in never lost. That is why the Lord designates it as 'Sat' (XVII.27).

Again, by saying "there is no fear of contrary result in this path," the Lord means that an action is apt to produce good or evil, favourable or unfavourable results, only when it is prompted by some interested motive; but there being no desire in Karmayoga, it cannot lead to any contrary result. In the adoration offered with a motive to the Devas, manes, or men of this world, if there is a lapse causing displeasure in the object of adoration, some harm might accrue

to the Sādhaka; but in the disinterested or motiveless performance of sacrifice, charity, austerity, service and other actions, no harm will accrue even if there is any lapse. To take another illustration, a dose of medicine is taken to control a malady; but if it is not a correct remedy; it produces the contrary effect by aggravating the malady. Unlike this the practice of Karmayoga does not conduce to any such undesirable result (VI. 40). That is to say, if it fails to bring the Sādhaka to a realization of the supreme state, owing to the Yoga not having reached its consummation, the follower of this path has neither to take birth in the lower order of creation, nor go through the tortures of hell, in consequence of evil deeds done in previous births, or as a result of incidental unavoidable injury done to creatures in the course of sacrificial or other meritorious performances; nor is he deprived of the enjoyments of this world or of the next, earned through virtuous deeds done in previous lives. Such a Sādhaka invariably attains after death the higher worlds to which men of virtuous deeds alone are entitled and staying there for a long time takes birth in the family of pious and wealthy men or in a family of Yogīs, and through the habit formed in his previous existence resumes the practice of Yoga (VI.41-44).

Here the word 'Pratyavāya' cannot be interpreted to mean 'hindrance' in the practice of Karmayoga, as some have done. For contact with worldly enjoyments and the association of erring, worldly-minded and unbelieving people obtained through the sins of previous births may cause hindrance in the practice of Karmayoga; but certainly disinterested action can never lead to any undesirable consequences. Therefore, it is but meet and proper to interpret the clause as meaning 'there is no fear of contrary result', as we have done, instead of taking the word to mean 'hindrance'.

The words 'Asya Dharmasya' (of this path) undoubtedly refer to 'Karmayoga' or the path of disinterested action indicated by the word 'Yoga' in the preceding verse as opposed to 'Sāṅkhya' or 'Jñānayoga', the path of knowledge. 'Karmayoga' is a compound word consisting of two components, 'Karma' and 'Yoga'. Good action, approved by the scriptures, is denoted by the term 'Karma', and evenness of mind is known as 'Yoga' (II.48); therefore, performance of duty, as laid down in the scriptures, with reference to one's Varṇa, Āśrama, nature and circumstances, without being possessed by the sense of meum, attachment, lust, anger, greed and infatuation, etc., and maintaining proper equanimity, is Karmayoga. It is also known as the Yoga of Equanimity, Yoga of Intellect and as Action for God's sake under the several names of 'Tadartha-karma', 'Madartha-karma' and 'Mat-karma'.

By the words "Even a little practice of this discipline (of Karmayoga) protects one from great fear" the Lord shows that when the practice of Karmayoga reaches its consummation, that very moment it brings man face to face with God Himself, and brings about God-realization. Therefore, the glory of Karmayoga, in its consummate state, cannot be too highly extolled. But leaving aside that consummation, if man succeeds in practising Karmayoga even partially, that is to say, without reaching a state when he is unshakable from equanimity, if he can perform some of his duties maintaining an attitude of equanimity towards pleasure and pain, success and failure etc., and if that attitude remains stable at the moment of death it will immediately bring him the realization of Brahma, and lead to his absorption in Brahma (II.72); or, if he takes a rebirth, he will be induced again to strive and

advance with the practice and will be, finally, brought to a realization of the supreme state (VI.41-45). Thus Karmayoga is bound to bring about the deliverance of the Sādhaka sooner or later. Performing with the motive of self-interest, for thousands of years, greatest of sacrifices and charities, and severe forms of askesis, vows and fasts and pilgrimages etc., cannot and will not bring about man's deliverance from the ocean of existence, but very simple or ordinary works of livelihood like begging for alms, fighting, agriculture and commerce, artisanship, rendering of physical service, etc., as enjoined by the scriptures, when done with equanimity, and in the right spirit, can and will deliver a man in a moment from the bondage of the world. For in the matter of deliverance, cultivation of the right attitude is more important than action itself, and has precedence over action.

As its ultimate result, disinterestedness brings about deliverance from the world. It is neither lost till it has achieved this final end, nor does it yield any other fruit. In its ultimate result, making the Sādhaka fully disinterested it brings about his salvation. That is why even a little practice of Karmayoga is considered to possess so much of glory.

Though there is no doubt that even a 'little practice' of Karmayoga will bring about the liberation of a soul, there is no rule that it will do so within a specified time. None can tell whether deliverance will be brought about in this very life, or in the next birth. For that "little practice" will gradually grow into the fullest state of development of Karmayoga, and then deliverance will be brought to the soul, in its natural course, as the final consummation. Therefore, men who possess energy and want to attain their highest welfare speedily should attempt to attain the full state of equanimity with all the enthusiasm and attention they can command.

Of all the sources of fear, the greatest, to which an embodied being is subject, is the fear of death. Therefore, the constant repetition of the ever recurring series of life and death, from eternity to eternity, is the worst of fears that could be imagined by the mind. The Lord has referred to this fear of ever recurring life and ever recurring death in a subsequent chapter, as the "ocean of birth and death" (XII.7). Like the infinite waves in an ocean, countless waves of life and death appear and disappear in the ocean of metempsychosis. It may somehow be possible to count the waves of the ocean; but who will count the number of deaths a Jīva will go through till it succeeds in attaining the true knowledge of God ? None can really do so. Thus, "protection from great fear," in the present verse, means taking across the infinite ocean of metempsychosis in the form of death, i.e., freeing from the bondage of life and death through absorption in the transcendent Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

Thus showing the greatness of Karmayoga, the Lord now proposes to enter into an exposition on the practice of Karmayoga; but before doing so He first brings out the distinction between the determinate, equipoised and stable intellect of the perfect Karmayogī, the possession of which is extremely necessary in Karmayoga, and the scattered intellect of men moved by desires, which is an obstacle in the practice of Karmayoga:—

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन।
बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥ ४१ ॥

कुरुनन्दन O delighter of the Kuru race, Arjuna; इह in this (Yoga); व्यवसायात्मिका determinate; बुद्धिः intellect; एका (is) directed singly (towards one ideal); अव्यवसायिनाम् of the undecided; बुद्धयः thoughts; हि indeed; बहुशाखाः (are) scattered in many directions; च and; अनन्ताः endlessly diverse.

Arjuna, in this Yoga (of disinterested action) the intellect is determinate and directed singly towards one ideal; whereas the intellect of the undecided (ignorant men moved by desires) wanders in all directions, after innumerable aims. (41)

The intellect which determines only one thing, and remains unshakably fixed to it, in other words, which points to God and God alone, and remains steadfast in God, and referring to which verse 39 says that one equipped with it gets freed from the shackles of Karma,—it is that determinate intellect, in the form of unalterable equanimity, which is described in this verse as 'Vyavasāyātmikā Buddhi'. It is in this sense that the term 'Buddhi' will be found used at many places in this chapter. By calling it 'one-pointed', it is indicated that it cognizes only one entity viz., God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss; the various forms of sensuous enjoyment and the means of attaining them fall entirely beyond the range of its cognition. It is also referred to as a stable mind or equipoised mind.

Those who do not possess this determinate intellect, and whose mind is deluded by the feeling of diversity caused by ignorance, it is such men wanting in discrimination and deeply attached to enjoyments of the world who are denoted by the term 'Avyavasāyinām' in this verse. Declaring their intellect as 'scattered in many directions and endlessly diverse', it is intended to bring out that men who devote themselves to the performance of sacrifice, etc. With some selfish or interested motives, do so with various objects in view; if some of them take to a particular form of ritual for obtaining a particular form of enjoyment, others crave for other forms of enjoyment, and engage in other forms of ritual for obtaining their object. Besides, even while engaged in a particular form of ritual with a particular object in view, they seek the fulfilment of various desires and the attainment of various forms of enjoyment. They view differently the various things of the world and the various events that take place here. They regard some people as objects of their love, and others as objects of hatred. Even a particular object, they look upon as partially agreeable and partially disagreeable. Thus they view every object, even individual and every event of this world differently and their thoughts about them, again, are endlessly diverse.

Thus after describing the character of a determinate intellect, which is so very essential for a Sādhaka following the path of disinterested action, and the intellect of men moved by desire, which is worthy of being relinquished, the next three verses are devoted to a description of the character, outlook on life, and conduct of men devoted to action with a selfish motive, in order to prove that the very thought of self-interest, and worldly enjoyment and worldly prosperity ought to be rejected:—

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः।
वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः॥ ४२॥

कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम्।
क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥ ४३ ॥
भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम्।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥ ४४ ॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; कामात्मानः full of worldly desires; वेदवादरताः devoted to the letter of the Vedas; स्वर्गपराः looking upon heaven as the supreme goal; नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः arguing that there is nothing beyond heaven; अविपश्चितः (those) unwise men; भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति for the attainment of pleasure and power; क्रियाविशेषबहुलाम् recommending many rituals of various kinds; जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् holding out rebirth as the fruit of such acts; याम् such; इमाम् this; पुष्पिताम् flowery; वाचम् speech; प्रवदन्ति utter; तयापहृतचेतसाम् of those whose minds are carried away by that speech; भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानाम् of those who are deeply attached to pleasure and power; समाधौ on the truth relating to God; व्यवसायात्मिका determinate; बुद्धिः intellect; न विधीयते is never concentrated.

Arjuna, those who are full of worldly desire and devoted to the letter of the Vedas, who look upon heaven, as the supreme goal and argue that there is nothing beyond heaven are unwise. They utter flowery speech recommending many rituals of various kinds for the attainment of pleasure and power with rebirth as their fruit. Those whose minds are carried away by such words, and who are deeply attached to pleasure and worldly power, cannot attain the determinate intellect concentrated on God. (42,43,44)

The word 'Kāma', forming part of the compound word 'Kāmātmānaḥ' used here, is the equivalent of 'enjoyment'. He who, being deeply attached to worldly enjoyments, gets absorbed in their thought, and wholly forgets even his human state in his mad pursuit of them, has been described in the verse as a 'Kāmātmā', i.e., one obsessed by desire of enjoyment.

The Vedas contain injunctions for many diverse rituals for the attainment of enjoyments of this world as well as of the next, with descriptions of the fruits of such rituals. Men who are deeply attached to such injunctions of the Vedas and to the enjoyments which they hold out as rewards for carrying out those injunctions are referred to in these verses as 'Vedavādaratāḥ' i.e., men devoted to the letter of the Vedas. The word 'Vedavādaratāḥ' surely does not refer to those who are deeply attached to such injunctions of the Vedas as are intended to promote detachment from the world, and propound the real nature of God; for those who are devoted to such injunctions, and understand their true meaning and significance, do not declare that attainment of heaven is the supreme goal of life, and that there is nothing beyond heaven. Therefore, the word 'Vedavādaratāḥ' in these verses refers only to those who are ignorant of the truth that the primary aim of the four Vedas is to propound the reality about God, who is the only object whom they seek to know (XV.15). It is because of their ignorance of this truth that these men get attached to the rituals prescribed in the Vedas for the satisfaction of worldly desires, and to their fruits.

Those who look upon attainment of heaven or the celestial world as the supreme

goal of life, nay, in whose eyes nothing is greater than the attainment of that world, and, as such who always remain indifferent to practices leading to God-Realization, are described in these verses as 'Svargaparāḥ'. And the adjective 'Nānyadastītivādinaḥ', i.e., those who argue that there is nothing beyond heaven, refers to those persons, devoid of right judgment and discrimination, who ever remain merged in the enjoyments of the world, and in whose eyes beyond such pleasures of the world as are afforded by the possession of a wife, children, wealth, honour, fame, social prestige etc., and the enjoyments and pleasures, that are obtained in heaven there is no such object of life as Mokṣa, or salvation, for the attainment of which man should strive. In their view, attainment of heaven is the supreme goal of life, and this they consider to be the objective of the Vedas as well. They advocate this ideal, and propagate it publicly for the acceptance of the world. By declaring such people as 'unwise' and wanting in judgment, the Lord intends to show that had they determined their goal of life and duty after discriminating between truth and untruth, reality and unreality, they would not have entangled themselves in this fashion in the cobweb of worldly desires. Therefore, man should always exercise his judgment in the determination of his duty.

Use of the adjectives 'Imām' and 'Yām' with the word 'Vācam' indicates that the declaration of such pedantic men that there is no higher ideal in life than the attainment of heavenly enjoyments and the Vedic texts quoted by them, enjoining many rites and practices for obtaining enjoyments and worldly power, and holding out rebirth as their fruit, carry away the minds of these pedants as well as of those who listen to them. By describing their speech as 'flowery', it is meant to show that there is nothing of real merit in those words, and that they attract the mind of the hearer only to the nominal and momentary pleasures of fleeting enjoyments. Like the odourless Palāśa flower they have a very attractive appearance, on account of which men attached to worldly enjoyments and pleasures fall an easy prey to their temptation.

The "determinate intellect", mentioned in this verse, is the same which has been referred to in verse 41, and "Samādhi" should be taken to mean that in which the mind is absorbed during contemplation (समाधीयते अस्मिन् बुद्धिः) viz., God. And by saying that "those whose mind is carried away by these flowery words and who are deeply attached to worldly enjoyments and power cannot attain this intellect fixed on God", it is intended to show that their mind, being attached to enjoyments and power, ever remains unsteady and fickle, and they are as a rule extremely selfish by nature. That is why the conclusion of their mind in respect of God is never unshakable or firm.

Demonstrating above that people obsessed by desires, and attached to enjoyments and worldly prosperity, do not attain the determinate intellect, the Lord, in order to instruct Arjuna in Karmayoga, now advises him to be free from attachment to enjoyments and power, and cultivate equanimity:—

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥ ४५ ॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; **वेदाः** the Vedas; **त्रैगुण्यविषयाः** deal with the evolutes of the three Guṇas (modes of Prakṛti). viz., sense-enjoyments and the means of attaining such enjoyments;

निस्त्रैगुण्य: indifferent to these enjoyments and their means; निर्द्वन्द्व: rising above pairs of opposites (such as pleasure and pain, etc.); नित्यसत्त्वस्थ: established in the Eternal Existence—God; निर्योगक्षेम: absolutely unconcerned about the supply of wants and the preservation of what has already been attained; आत्मवान् (and) having a self-controlled mind; भव be.

Arjuna, the Vedas thus deal with the evolutes of the three Guṇas (modes of Prakṛti); viz., worldly enjoyments and the means of attaining such enjoyments; be thou indifferent to these enjoyments and their means, rising above pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain etc., established in the Eternal Existence (God), absolutely unconcerned about the supply of wants and the preservation of what has been already attained, and self-controlled. (45)

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—these are the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti; the evolutes of these three Guṇas are known by the name of 'Traiguṇya'. The term 'Traiguṇya', therefore, covers all objects of the world that contribute to, and all actions that are instrumental in bringing about, enjoyment and prosperity. Books which contain a description of these, with all their details, are called 'Traiguṇyaviṣayāḥ'. In this verse, the Vedas have been described as such because the major part of the Vedas deals with Karmakāṇḍa, or ritual for the satisfaction of worldly desires.

Complete freedom from all attraction, attachment and desire for all the evolutes of the three Guṇas in the form of enjoyments of this world and the next, and for every form of action leading to such enjoyments, is what is meant by becoming 'Nistraiguṇya'. 'Nistraiguṇya' here does not mean total renunciation of every form of activity; for such total renunciation of action and objects of the world is not possible for a human being (III.5). The body he owns is also an evolute of the Guṇas, and it is not possible for him to renounce it. Therefore, becoming 'Nistraiguṇya' should be interpreted to mean renunciation of all identification with, and attraction, attachment and desire for, the body and its activities, and for all enjoyments that are obtained as the fruit of such activities. In other words, it points to a state of existence which has risen above the influence of the three Guṇas and their evolutes.

Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, good and bad reputation, honour and ignominy, favourable and unfavourable circumstances, these states and sentiments, indicative of mutual opposition, are known as the pairs of opposites. Arjuna has been advised to maintain equanimity when faced with them, and not to give way to joy or grief, attraction or repulsion. This is what is meant by rising above the pairs of opposites.

God, alone, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, is eternally existent. He is the only Reality. Therefore, meditating constantly on the eternal, imperishable, omniscient Supreme Person, to become inseparably united with Him, is what is meant by being "established in the Eternal Existence". The text describes this state by the term 'Nityasattvasthaḥ', which may also be interpreted to mean 'ever established in the Sattva Guṇa'; but the first interpretation given above conveys a better and more comprehensive meaning, inasmuch as the fulfilment of Karmayoga lies in rising above the influence of all the Guṇas and realizing God.

Attainment of an unattained object is called 'Yoga', and preservation of what is already attained is called 'Kṣema'. Even after renunciation of the desire for worldly enjoyments, the desire for 'Yogakṣema' at

least for the maintenance of the body remains; therefore, Arjuna has been exhorted in this verse to give up that desire as well by being asked to become 'Niryogakṣema'. In other words, he has been asked to wean himself completely from all attachments and senses of possession and never to care for the possession or preservation of any object whatsoever.

The term 'Ātmā', forming part of the word 'Ātmavān' used in this verse, denotes the mind coupled with the senses. So long as the mind, intellect and the senses of a man are not fully brought under his control, that is to say, so long as they do not behave as friends but continue to be at variance with him, he cannot be called an 'Ātmavān'. Therefore, he alone who has perfectly disciplined and subdued his mind, intellect and senses is entitled to be called 'Ātmavān', or one in possession of his 'self'. The Sādhaka whose mind, intellect, senses and body are not thoroughly subdued will find it extremely difficult to practise the 'Yoga of Equanimity', and he who has controlled them will find it easy to attain this Yoga (VI.36). That is why the Lord advises Arjuna in the verse to be an 'Ātmavān' by bringing his mind, senses and body completely under control.

In the preceding verse, telling Arjuna that the Vedas deal only with the evolutes of the three Guṇas, he was asked to be free from attachment to all worldly enjoyments and their means, which are evolved from the three Guṇas. He now proceeds to point out the glory of God-Realization, which follows from such detachment.

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः सम्प्लुतोदके।
तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः॥ ४६॥

सर्वतः सम्प्लुतोदके (to a man standing) at the brink of a sheet of water overflowing on all sides; उदपाने for a small well; यावान् as much; अर्थः (there is) use; विजानतः ब्राह्मणस्य to an illumined Brāhmaṇa; सर्वेषु वेदेषु for all the Vedas; तावान् (there is) that much (use).

A Brāhmaṇa, who has obtained enlightenment, has the same use for all the Vedas as one who stands at the brink of a sheet of water overflowing on all sides has for a small reservoir of water. (46)

By means of the above illustaration, the Lord has described the satiety of illumined saints. The intention is to show that just as the man who stands at the brink of a lake overflowing with sweet, life-giving, wholesome and unfathomable water has no use for small tanks, ponds, wells etc., because all his needs relating to water are met by the water of the lake, even so he who renouncing all attachment for objects of enjoyment comes to realize God, in other words, he who attains the ocean of supreme bliss in the form of God, or Integral Brahma, does not depend for his happiness and gratification on objects of enjoyment attained by way of reward for rituals recommended in the Vedas. His desires get fulfilled by extinction, and he becomes thirstless and satisfied for all time to come. Therefore, in order to attain this state, one should wholly abandon all desire and attachment for worldly enjoyments obtainable as the fruit of Vedic rituals, and become absolutely free from the influence of the three Guṇas.

The present verse may also be interpreted to mean that just as one who stands at the brink of a sheet of water overflowing on all

sides takes for his use as much water as he requires, even so the wise man who has known Brahma makes use of such portions of the Vedas as suit his purpose. But the interpretation that we have put on the verse conveys a better meaning; for the world is absolutely of no use to the wise man who has realized Brahma (III.18).

Describing thus the glory of Karmayoga, represented by equanimity, and its fruit, the Lord now devotes two verses to an exposition of the character of Karmayoga, and exhorts Arjuna to perform his duties properly establishing himself in Karmayoga.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥ ४७॥

ते your; अधिकारः right (there is); कर्मणि to work; एव only; फलेषु to (its) fruits; कदाचन मा never; कर्मफलहेतुः instrumental in making (your) actions bear fruit; मा भूः be not; मा nor; ते your; अकर्मणि to inaction; सङ्गः attachment; अस्तु be.

Your right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof. Be not instrumental in making your actions bear fruit, nor let your attachment be to inaction. (47)

The duty enjoined on a person with due regard to his Varṇa or order in society, Āśrama or stage in life, and also his nature and circumstances is referred to by the word 'Karma' in the present verse. Sinful acts prohibited by the scriptures do not fall under this category; for man has no sanction to perform them, he does so only under the impulse of likes and dislikes, and such actions are unauthorized on his part. That is why persons guilty of such acts are punished by being subjected to suffering and torture in hell etc. In this verse when the Lord says, "your right is to work only" He intends to convey the following ideas:—

(1) Freedom of will is allowed to a human being alone. Therefore, if through the performance of his own duty he goes on carrying out the injunctions of the Lord, and renouncing all attachment to those actions and their fruits utilizes them as a means to God-realization, he can easily succeed in realizing God. Being in possession of a human body, Arjuna enjoyed freedom of action; it therefore behoved him to make the best use of that opportunity.

(2) Man has a right to action alone, not to the renunciation of action. If out of egoism he forcibly tries to renounce all action, he will not succeed in the attempt (III.5); for his nature will compel him to act (III.33; XVIII.59, 60). In this way he will be abusing his authority, and by refusing to perform an obligatory duty he will also have to bear the evil consequences of violating the commands of the scriptures. Therefore, it was obligatory on Arjuna to perform his duty resolutely, and not to renounce it.

(3) Just as Government issues licences to people for possession of arms and ammunition of various descriptions and using them in self-defence or for the protection of others, subject to certain rules and regulations, which are duly explained to them, and anyone misusing the power is punished, and also forfeits the licence, even so being endowed with a human body with the appurtenances of a mind, intellect and senses, one is given the power and authority to do fresh acts for attaining liberation from the bondage of mundane existence in the form of life and death, and for doing good to others. He who makes the best use of this

opportunity gets liberated from the bondage of Karma, and attains the supreme state. But he who misuses the opportunity becomes liable to punishment; his authority is snatched away from him, in other words, he is again consigned to the lower order of creation. Knowing this secret, man should make the best use of this opportunity.

By saying that man has no right to the fruits of his actions, the Lord intends to bring out that man is not free in the matter of obtaining the fruit of his actions. He knows not what action of his will bear what type of fruit, nor how and when he will get that fruit. He cannot get that fruit when he desires to get it; nor can he avoid it. He desires one thing, and gets something else in return. Many men crave to obtain various forms of enjoyment, but it is not in their hands to get an opportunity for such enjoyment. They do not seek separation from, or contact with, certain people; but they are forced on them. Dispensation of the fruit of actions is wholly under the control of Providence, and man is totally helpless in the matter. True, sacrificial performance recommended in the scriptures, as such performance of a Putreṣṭi sacrifice for obtaining a male issue etc., when completed in accordance with the scriptural injunctions in all their details, are sure to yield the desired fruit, and men who have such desires may, indeed, perform them; but even such ordained fruit is not under the control of the performer of the sacrifice, but lies in the hands of the deity who is sought to be appeased through such a sacrifice. Therefore, it is nothing but ignorance to be obsessed by desire for the possession of wealth, power, honour, fame and prestige etc., in this life and for the attainment of celestial worlds hereafter. Moreover, all these objects are altogether insignificant and transient and have no stability. Therefore, Arjuna was advised not to crave for the fruit of any action whatsoever.

Does this mean that even the desire for salvation should be excluded from the mind? Our answer to this is that the desire for salvation, being a noble desire, is no doubt helpful in attaining salvation, though it is better to have no desire at all. But without obtaining an insight into the truth and reality of God, it is exceedingly difficult to be free from this desire and perform action without any ulterior motive, regarding it as a sacred duty to carry out the commandments of God. Therefore, it is not improper to entertain the desire for salvation. The very idea that exclusion of the desire for salvation will hasten salvation is nothing but nursing the desire for salvation in an indirect form.

Entertaining a desire, attachment, hope or craving for actions approved of by the scriptures and performed with the body, mind and intellect, as well as for their fruit is what is meant by becoming instrumental in making one's actions bear fruit; for he alone who gets attached to actions and their fruits reaps their fruit, and not he who renounces all desire for, and attachment to, actions as well as their fruit (XVIII.12). Therefore, in asking Arjuna not to be instrumental in making his action bear fruit, the Lord intends to say that for the attainment of supreme peace Arjuna should perform his duties wholly renouncing attachment to, and desire for his actions.

He who acts in the aforesaid manner can never be instrumental in making his actions bear fruit in the shape of pleasure and pain. All his actions, good and evil, lose their capacity to bear fruit. Attachment being the sole incentive to sinful acts, he in whom attachment and desire are wholly absent can never commit a fresh sin, while his past sins are burnt by the fire of his current actions, which are devoid of attachment and desire.

In this way he can never induce the fruit of sinful acts, and having renounced the fruit of virtuous deeds, he does not induce the fruit of virtuous deeds in the shape of earthly or heavenly enjoyments. All the actions of the man who acts in this way without attachment and desire are neutralized (IV.23), and he attains the blissful supreme state (II.51).

At the conclusion of the verse asking Arjuna not to have any attachment for inaction, the Lord has shown that just as one who indulges in prohibited action, as opposed to action sanctioned by the scriptures, misuses the right to preform action, even so non-performance of a duty allotted to him with due regard to his order in society, stage in life as well as his nature and circumstances constitutes a misuse of that right. Renunciation of an obligatory duty is in no way justified. Its abandonment through ignorance is, therefore, a Tāmasika form of renunciation (XVIII.7), and the relinquishment of one's duty out of a sense of physical discomfort involved in its performance is a Rājasika form of renunciation (XVIII.8). Without performing one's allotted duties, one cannot reach the end of the path of Karmayoga (III.4). Therefore, the Lord advises Arjuna to avoid attachment to inaction, or non-performance of prescribed duties by all means.

In the above verse, Arjuna has been instructed to avoid being instrumental in making his action bear fruit, as also to avoid attachment to inaction. The question, therefore, naturally arises: how should he work ? The next verse deals with that question.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते॥ ४८॥

धनञ्जय O Arjuna (lit., a winner of riches; **सङ्गम्** attachment; **त्यक्त्वा** renouncing; **सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः** in success and failure (both); **समः** even-tempered; **भूत्वा** getting; **योगस्थः** dwelling in Yoga; **कर्माणि** (your) duties; **कुरु** perform; **समत्वम्** evenness (of temper); **योगः** Yoga; **उच्यते** is called.

Arjuna, perform your duties established in Yoga, renouncing attachment, and even-tempered in success and failure; evenness of temper is called Yoga. (48)

The present verse delineates the process of practising Karmayoga. When the Sādhaka of Karmayoga relinquishes attachment both to action and its fruit, he ceases to have likes and dislikes, and is therefore no longer swayed by the feelings of joy and sorrow, which are the outcome of the former. In that state alone it is possible to maintain equanimity in success and failure. Equanimity in success and failure cannot be attained so long as these weaknesses persist. Again, through the practice of equanimity in success and failure, i.e., in the crowning and frustration of one's efforts and in the agreeable and disagreeable consequences of the same one can finally attain the state of freedom from likes and dislikes thus relinquishment of attachment has very close relationship with equanimity, and the two states help each other in their mutual growth. It is, therefore, that the Lord advises Arjuna in this verse to do his duty relinquishing attachment, and remaining indifferent to success and failure.

Through the constant practice of indifference to success and failure of actions man reaches ultimately the state of unshakable stability in equanimity, and such a stability in equanimity is the culmination of Karmayoga. Therefore, when the Lord

exhorts Arjuna to perform his duties established in Yoga, he intends to bring home to Arjuna's mind that equanimity practised with reference to success and failure of actions alone will not do; he will have to practise equanimity in the performance of every act by being free from likes and dislikes with reference to every object, every being, nay, to the act itself and its fruit.

The word 'Yoga' bears a peculiar meaning in the Gītā and the Lord conveys that peculiar meaning by defining it as equanimity. The Lord thus establishes identity between Yoga and equanimity, and shows that one can become a Yogī by attaining equanimity through any discipline whatsoever. Therefore, in order to qualify himself for Karmayoga Arjuna is asked to perform his duties establishing himself in equanimity.

Detailing, in the above words, the process of Karmayoga and disparaging action prompted by desire and selfish motive and glorifying the spirit of equanimity, the Lord now commands Arjuna to resort to equanimity.

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय।
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥ ४९ ॥

बुद्धियोगात् in comparison with (this) Yoga (in the form of equanimity); कर्म action (with a selfish motive); दूरेण अवरम् (is) much lower; धनञ्जय O Arjuna; बुद्धौ in (this) equipoise of mind; शरणम् refuge; अन्विच्छ seek; हि for; फलहेतवः (those who are) instrumental in making their actions bear fruit (in the form of pleasure and pain); कृपणाः (are) poor (and wretched).

Action (with a selfish motive) is far inferior to this Yoga in the form of equanimity. Do you seek refuge in this equipoise of mind, Arjuna; for poor and wretched are those who are instrumental in making their actions bear fruit. (49)

The word 'Buddhiyogāt', in this verse, has been used in the sense of Karmayoga, in which duties are performed with an equipoised mind renouncing all attachments and desires, and not in the sense of Jñānayoga; for from verse 39, where the Lord says, "now hear the same as presented from the standpoint of Karmayoga." He has been dwelling on Karmayoga without any reference to Jñānayoga. Besides, in this verse itself, people who crave for the fruit of their actions have been denounced as "poor and wretched", and, in the next verse, glorifying the Sādhaka who is endowed with equanimity. Arjuna has been exhorted to practise Karmayoga; and, in verse 51, it has been declared that the wise man endowed with equanimity, renouncing the fruit of his actions, attains the blissful supreme state. All this evidence makes it perfectly clear that interpretation of the word 'Buddhiyoga' in this context as 'Jñānayoga' will be out of tune with the line of argument which the Lord has been pursuing. For with reference to the Jñānayogī it is out of place to say that renouncing the fruit of actions he attains the blissful supreme state. Since he does not claim the authorship of any action at all, renunciation of the fruit of actions is out of question for a Jñānayogī.

By declaring action with a selfish motive as far inferior to the Yoga of equanimity, the Lord has shown that the fruit of actions prompted by desire is the attainment of fleeting and momentary pleasure whereas the fruit of Karmayoga is realization of God. Thus there is no comparison whatsoever

between the two. The word 'Karma' in this verse cannot be interpreted in the sense of prohibited action, for such action is altogether worth renouncing and its fruit is nothing but untold misery and suffering. Therefore, it cannot be cited as a fit subject of comparison to bring out the glory of the Yoga of Equanimity.

Similarly, the word 'Buddhau', in this verse, stands for equanimity, which is being discussed here. By exhorting Arjuna to seek refuge in equanimity, the Lord has shown that the easiest way to reach the state of supreme bliss lies through the constant practice of maintaining evenness of mind with reference to every action one may perform, every moment of life, and under every circumstance.

Those who make themselves accountable for the fruit of their actions by conceiving attachment and entertaining desire for them as well as for their fruit have been described by the Lord as poor and wretched in spirit, meaning thereby that they are objects of pity. By implication, therefore, He advises Arjuna not to be poor and wretched like them.

Thus commanding Arjuna to take recourse to equanimity, the Lord devotes the next two verses to the glorification of noble souls who are endowed with equanimity, and again instructs Arjuna to practise Karmayoga and describes its reward.

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते।
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्॥ ५०॥

बुद्धियुक्तः (one) endowed with equanimity; **सुकृतदुष्कृते** good and evil; **उभे** both; **इह** in this (life); **जहाति** sheds; **तस्मात्** therefore; **योगाय** (for the practice of this) Yoga (of equanimity); **युज्यस्व** exert yourself; **योगः** this Yoga (of equanimity); **कर्मसु कौशलम्** (constitutes) skill in action.

Endowed with equanimity, one sheds in this life both good and evil. Therefore, strive for the practice of this Yoga of equanimity. Skill in action lies in (the practice of this) Yoga. (50)

How does the Yogī endowed with equanimity shed both good and evil in this very life ? He does so in the sense that established in equanimity, he rids himself in this very life of the residue of all virtuous and sinful deeds performed by him in this as well as in countless past lives, persisting in the form of tendencies stored in the mind. He ceases to have any connection with those actions, hence they cannot bear fruit in the form of a rebirth. For through the performance of disinterested action for the good of the world, all his actions are neutralized (IV.23). Similarly, virtuous and sinful deeds of his current life also fall from him inasmuch as while sinful acts are bodily renounced by him, virtuous deeds performed by him in accordance with the scriptural injunctions, being characterized by absence of attachment to their fruit, are reduced to the category of 'inaction' (IV.20). Therefore they too are as good as renounced. By advising Arjuna to exert himself for this Yoga of equanimity, the Lord intends to bring it home to Arjuna's mind that such a yogī gets liberated in this very life, and therefore He expects Arjuna also to attain that state.

By saying that Yoga constitutes skill in action the Lord seeks to make it clear that action by its very nature leads to bondage, and man cannot remain inactive even for a moment and has to engage himself in some

action or another. Under such circumstances, practice of the Yoga of equanimity is the easiest and best device to obtain release from the bondage of Karma. He who performs actions armed with the Yoga of equanimity is not bound by them due to this equanimity. Therefore, in the practice of equanimity lies skill in action. Whereas the Sādhaka of this Yoga only tries to perform his duties with an equipoised mind consummation of equanimity is attained only in the state of perfection.

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः।
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम्॥ ५१॥

हि for; बुद्धियुक्ताः possessing an equipoised mind; मनीषिणः wise men; कर्मजम् फलम् the fruit accruing from actions; त्यक्त्वा renouncing; जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः freed from the shackles of birth; अनामयम् पदम् the (supreme) blissful state; गच्छन्ति attain.

For wise men possessing an equipoised mind, renouncing the fruit of actions and freed from the shackles of birth, attain the blissful supreme state. (51)

The word 'Hi', in the above verse, is indicative of cause. By using it the Lord intends to show that the present verse will explain how skill in action lies in performing actions with an equipoised mind. The word 'Buddhiyuktāh' refers to the Karmayogīs who are already endowed with equanimity, as stated above, that is to say, are firmly established in equanimity. The term 'Manīṣiṇaḥ' explains that they alone are truly wise and learned, who by establishing themselves in this state of equanimity have attained the goal of their human existence. Those who, even after obtaining human birth, which is an open door to salvation, remain merged in worldly enjoyments are indeed not wise (V.22). When through stability in the Yoga of equanimity one ceases to have any connection with the fruit of actions performed in the current life as well as in countless past lives, and is exempted once for all from the cycle of births and deaths, he is said to have obtained release from the bondage of Karma through renunciation of the fruit accruing from his actions. For attachment to worldly objects, which are the products of the three Guṇas, is the cause of man's rebirth (XIII.21); and the Yogī established in equanimity is completely rid of this attachment, hence he can no longer be reborn.

The term 'Anāmayam Padam' refers to the Supreme Abode of God, which is marked by the total absence of torments in the form of likes and dislikes, good and evil actions, morbid feelings like joy and sorrow, and all other evils; which is, again, wholly beyond Prakṛti and the evolutes of Prakṛti and is totally identical with God, and reaching which man does not return to this mortal world. Therefore, attainment of the Supreme Abode of God, realization of the formless, attributeless state of Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, or of God in form possessed of innumerable attributes, attainment of the supreme state, or of fimmortality—all these point to the realization of the same God and the same state of spiritual experience. In reality, there is no difference between them; differences lie only in the points of view of the Sādhakas.

The Lord has shown above that through the practice of Karmayoga the Supreme Abode of God or the supreme state of Bliss can be attained. Here, Arjuna may possibly, ask

when and how he may be able to reach that Abode, or that state. Therefore, the next two verses deal with that question.

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च॥ ५२॥

यदा when; ते your; बुद्धिः mind; मोहकलिलम् the mire of delusion; व्यतितरिष्यति will have fully crossed; तदा then; श्रुतस्य to the enjoyments which have been heard of; च and; श्रोतव्यस्य to the enjoyments which are (yet) to be heard of; निर्वेदम् indifference; गन्तासि you will attain.

When your mind will have fully crossed the mire of delusion, you will then grow indifferent to the enjoyments of this world and the next that have been heard of as well as to those that are yet to be heard of. (52)

'Mohakalila', spoken of in this verse, refers to the 'infatuation' mentioned in verse 2 of this chapter as 'Kaśmala' which had overtaken Arjuna's mind as a result of his affection for, and his apprehension for the death of his relations and friends. It was this infatuation which had produced a confusion in Arjuna's mind, and rendered him incapable of properly ascertaining his duty. This infatuation is a kind of impurity, which obscures the mind, and does not allow the intellect to come to a proper decision, and shuts out the truth from it.

Eradication of this impurity through discrimination between the abiding and the fleeting, as well as between that which ought to be done and that which should be avoided, brought about by Satsaṅga, or the association of saintly souls, and thereby determining one's legitimate duty and performing it disinterestedly, devoting the mind solely to God and renouncing all worldly attachments and desires,—this is what is meant by one's mind crossing the mire of delusion.

The term 'Śruta' covers all the enjoyable objects of this world and the next that had been seen, heard of or enjoyed till then, and the term 'Śrotavya' indicates all that might be seen, heard of or enjoyed thereafter. Total extinction of attachment to all these, regarding them as transient and conducive to sorrow, is what is meant by 'Nirveda', or the attitude of indifference to the same. The Lord tells Arjuna in this verse that when after the disappearance of infatuation his mind will regain its natural state of transparency, he will then develop genuine indifference towards all the ephemeral objects of this world and the next.

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला।
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि॥ ५३॥

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना confused by hearing conflicting statements; ते your; बुद्धिः intellect; यदा when; समाधौ (in meditation) on God; निश्चला steady; अचला (and) undistracted; स्थास्यति will rest; तदा then; योगम् union (with God); अवाप्स्यसि you will attain.

When your intellect, confused by hearing conflicting statements, will rest, steady and undistracted (in meditation) on God, you will then attain Yoga (everlasting union with God). (53)

The intellect gets distracted and bewildered when it hears various statements about the enjoyments of this world and the next, and the means of obtaining them; it cannot, therefore, unwaveringly stick to one resolution, and one idea. It favours one idea today and leans towards another view tomorrow. Such a distracted and wavering intellect has been referred to in this verse as 'Śrutivipratipannā' or confused by hearing conflicting statements. Such an intellect is said to suffer from the fault of distraction (विक्षेपदोष).

Now, when that intellect, having crossed the mire of delusion and fully recoiled from the enjoyments of this world and the next, and freeing itself wholly from the fault of distraction, takes to the practice of meditation on God, and gets unshakably and firmly concentrated on God alone, it is said to have rested, steady and undistracted, in meditation on God.

The term 'Yoga' in this verse means attainment of perpetual and complete union with God. For this is brought about only when the mind being freed from the three faults of impurity, distraction and obscurity, and endowed with discrimination and dispassion, rests firmly concentrated on God. Immediately after this Arjuna asks the Lord about the marks of the God-realized soul, possessed of a stable mind, which also goes to confirm that the term 'Yoga' in this context has been used in the sense of union with God, or God-realization.

In verse 50, Arjuna was asked to strive for the practice of Yoga, whereas this verse refers to the 'Yoga' which is attained as the goal after acquiring stability of mind. That is why the term 'Yoga' in this verse has been interpreted in the sense of God-realization. The two words 'Yoga' and 'Yogī' have been used in the Gītā in different senses in different contexts, some of which are shown below with examples for the convenience of the readers:—

YOGA

(1) *Yoga of Action* (Karmayoga)— VI.3: Here action has been enjoined on him who seeks to climb to the heights of Yoga. Therefore, 'Yoga' stands for Karmayoga.

(2) *Yoga of Meditation* (Dhyānayoga)— VI.19: The mind of the Yogī having been declared in this verse to be as steady as the flame of a lamp kept in a place sheltered from the wind, it is apparent that the term 'Yoga' has been used here in the sense of meditation.

(3) *Yoga of Even-mindedness* (Samatvayoga)—II.48: Here Arjuna has been enjoined to perform his duties, while established in Yoga, renouncing attachment and viewing success and failure alike. Hence 'Yoga' denotes the Yoga of Even-mindedness.

(4) *Divine Glory* (IX.5): The Lord asks Arjuna in this verse to behold His wonderful power; therefore, the term 'Yoga' here means the divine power and glory.

(5) *Yoga of Devotion* (Bhaktiyoga)— XIV.26: The verse speaks of the worshipper who worships God constantly and exclusively. Therefore, the term 'Yoga' here is an equivalent of Bhaktiyoga. There is explicit mention of the word 'Bhaktiyoga' in the verse itself.

(6) *Yoga consisting of eight limbs* (IV.28): The Term 'Yoga' in this verse cannot be taken in the sense of Sāṅkhyayoga or Karmayoga, for both these words are more comprehensive in their meaning than what is actually conveyed by this word in the verse under reference. All the practices mentioned in this verse as so many sacrifices are covered by Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga. Therefore, it seems proper to take the word 'Yoga' used in this verse in the sense of 'Aṣṭāṅgayoga', or the Yoga of Eight Limbs.

(7) *Sāṅkhyayoga* (XIII.24): In this verse, the word Sāṅkhya being used as an attribute of Yoga, it clearly indicates Sāṅkhyayoga.

The word 'Yoga' occurring in other places should similarly be interpreted according to the context.

YOGĪ

(1) *God* (X.17): Having been used, as a form of address for Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the term 'Yogī' here means God.

(2) *Knower of self* (VI.32): As the 'Yogī' mentioned in this verse is represented as viewing all alike, on the analogy of his own self, the term means here 'the knower of self'.

(3) *A Devotee who has attained perfection* (XII.14): As the verse speaks of one who has surrendered the mind and intellect to God, and the term is used as an attribute of the devotee, 'Yogī' in this verse means a devotee who has realized the goal.

(4) *Karmayogī* (V.11): The Yogī referred to in this verse having been represented as performing actions, without attachment, only for the sake of self-purification, the term 'Yogī', occurring in it should be interpreted to mean a Karmayogī (follower of the Path of Action).

(5) *Sāṅkhyayogī* (V.24): Realization of identity with Brahma having been mentioned as the goal to be reached by him, the 'Yogī', referred to in it means the Sāṅkhyayogī (follower of the Path of knowledge).

(6) *Bhaktiyogī* (VIII.14): Referring as it does to constant meditation on God with an undivided mind, the term 'Yogī' in this verse means the Bhaktiyogī (follower of the Path of Devotion).

(7) *A practising Yogī* (VI.45): The verse speaks of the highest goal being reached through diligent practice; hence 'Yogī' here means only a practising Yogī.

(8) *Dhyānayogī* (VI.10): The verse exhorts the Yogī to retire to a secluded place and, concentrating his mind, to practise constant meditation on God; therefore, the term here should be taken to mean a Dhyānayogī (follower of the Path of Meditation).

(9) *One who performs religious acts with some worldly motive* (VIII.25): The verse speaks of the Yogī returning to the mortal world; therefore, the term here should be taken to mean one who performs religious acts with the intent of gaining some selfish motive.

In the above verses, the Lord told Arjuna that when his mind would have crossed the mire of delusion and he would develop indifference towards the enjoyment of this world and the next, and when his mind would rest steady and undistracted in meditation on God, he would realize God, or attain union with Him. With reference to this, desiring to know the marks and conduct of the perfect Yogī, possessed of a stable mind, Arjuna asks the Lords:—

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत व्रजेत किम्॥ ५४॥

केशव O Kṛṣṇa; **समाधिस्थस्य स्थितप्रज्ञस्य** on one stable of mind and established in Samādhi (perfect tranquillity of mind); **का** what; **भाषा** (is) the definition; **स्थितधीः** (the man) of stable mind; **किम्** how; **प्रभाषेत** speaks; **किम्** how; **आसीत** sits; **किम्** how; **व्रजेत** moves (conducts himself).

Arjuna said: Kṛṣṇa, what is the definition (mark) of a God-realized soul, stable of mind and established in Samādhi (perfect tranquillity of mind) ? How does the man of stable mind speak, how does he sit, how does he walk ? (54)

The word 'Kesava' is a compound word composed of several parts, viz., Ka, A, Īśa and Va. Ka stands for Brahmā (the Creator), A for Viṣṇu (the Preserver) and Īśa for Śiva; and he whose Va, i.e., Body is identical with the above three aspects of the Deity is known as Keśava. Addressing the Lord as 'Keśava', in this verse, Arjuna wants to indicate that being the Almighty, Omniscient God, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the entire universe, Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone was capable of giving a proper answer to his questions.

In the preceding verse Arjuna was told by the Lord that when his mind would rest steady in Samādhi, that is to say, when it would be unshakably fixed in meditation on God, he would attain Yoga, or union with God. With reference to that statement Arjuna now desires to know the marks of the man who has attained perfection, i.e., who has realized God, and whose mind and intellect have become perfectly and unshakably stable in God. In order to bring out this point clearly, Arjuna has used the adjective 'Samādhisthasya' after the word 'Sthitaprajñasya' (of the God-realized soul).

The above characteristics of the perfect or God-realized soul might be taken as representing his inactive as well as active state. Arjuna also refers to both the states in his query. "How does he speak ?" and "How does he walk" ? refer to the active state of the perfect soul; and "How does he sit" refers to his state of inaction. The word 'Bhāṣā' in this verse has not been taken in the sense of 'speech', because the word 'Prabhāṣeta' in the second line also refers to his mode of 'speech'. 'Bhāṣā', therefore, has been interpreted as 'भाष्यते कथ्यते अनया', i.e., 'that which brings out the characteristic qualities of a thing.' According to this derivation of the word, 'Bhāṣā' has been rendered as a 'sign' or 'mark' in our translation of the verse. Thus Arjuna asks: "What is the mark of a God-realized soul ?"

The perfect soul who has realized God exhibits special characteristics in all his ways of life. Therefore, even his ordinary speech, his mode of sitting and his gait bring out certain special characteristics. But here the verbs 'speaks', 'sits' and 'walks' have not been used in that ordinary sense. The intention of Arjuna in asking the mode of speech of the perfect man is to know what layers of thought inspire his speech. Similarly the verb 'sits' refers to his state of inaction, and Arjuna by his query wants to know what is the state of the perfect man when he is not engaged in any form of action. And, lastly, the words "How does he walk ?" mean "How does he conduct himself in the world ?"

In the preceding verse, Arjuna asked four questions about the perfect soul who has realized God. The Lord answers these questions right up to the end of this chapter, interspersing the discourse now and then with other topics relevant to the points at issue. The verse which follows contains a short reply to the first question of Arjuna.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान्।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते॥५५॥

पार्थ O Arjuna; यदा when; मनोगतान् belonging to the mind; सर्वान् all; कामान् cravings; प्रजहाति thoroughly dismisses; आत्मना through the (joy of the) self; आत्मनि in the self; एव alone; तुष्टः (is) satisfied; तदा then; स्थितप्रज्ञः stable of mind; उच्यते is called.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, when one thoroughly dismisses all cravings of the mind, and is satisfied in the self through (the joy of) the self, then he is called stable of mind. (55)

The word 'Kāmān', with the adjective 'Sarvān', stands for all those desires, whether strong or weak which appear in the mind of man, due to whatever cause it may be, for contact with, or separation from, any object belonging to this world or the next. There are many fine shades of difference among desires, which are variously termed in Sanskrit as Vāsanā, Spṛhā, Icchā, and Tṛṣṇā, etc. An attempt will be made below to bring out these nice distinctions indicative of different states of the mind. Completely ridding oneself of all these forms of desire once for all is what is meant by "thoroughly dismissing the cravings of the mind."

Vāsanā is a subtble and unmanifest form of desire, proceeding from likes and dislikes, for the preservation of all that is dear, viz., one's body, wife, progeny, wealth, honour and prestige, etc., and for the destruction of all that is repulsive. The next stage is represented by 'Spṛhā', or the feeling of want or indispensability in respect of an agreeable object, arising from a consciousness of its absence. This feeling of 'want' represents a more developed form of desire. Desire for the possession of an agreeable object which is lacking and for the destruction of that which is disagreeable, when manifest, takes the form of 'Icchā' or 'wish.' This represents the fully developed form of desire. The last stage is represented by 'Tṛṣṇā' or seeking to possess more and more, even though one may be amply provided with all objects of enjoyment,—a devoted and faithful wife, an obedient son, abundant riches, etc. This is the grossest form of desire.

By adding the adjective 'Manogatān' to the word 'Kāmān', it has been shown that the mind is the seat of all desires (III.40); therefore, when along with the intellect the mind also rests stable in God, all these forms of desire will vanish. Thus it should be taken for granted that so long as the desires existing in the mind of a Sādhaka are not totally eradicated, his intellect has not become stable.

After the total cessation of all desires of the mind when the Sādhaka directly perceives the true nature of the eternal, ever pure and ever awakened Supreme Self, wholly beyond this objective world, and rests in perpetual calm, he is known as "satisfied in the self through the self". In Chap. III. verse 17 also a God-realized soul has been referred to as gratified with the self and contented in the self alone. When through the continuous and devoted practice of Karmayoga the Yogī finally reaches this state, then alone it should be understood that his intellect has become unshakably fixed in God or that he has realized God. This is what is meant by saying "then he is called stable of mind".

Of the four questions of Arjuna about the characteristics of the God-realized soul, the first is so comprehensive that the other three questions are covered by it. Viewed in this light, all the remaining verses of this chapter may be regarded as embodying the Lord's reply to that one question. But in order to demarcate the other three questions, the next

two verses may be regarded as containing the answer to the second question of Arjuna, viz., how a God-realized soul speaks, or in other words, what are the layers of thought which inspire his speech.

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ ५६ ॥

दुःखेषु amid sorrows; **अनुद्विग्नमनाः** whose mind remains unperturbed; **सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः** whose thirst for pleasures has altogether disappeared; **वीतरागभयक्रोधः** who is free from passion, fear and anger; **मुनिः** the sage; **स्थितधीः** stable of mind; **उच्यते** is called.

The sage, whose mind remains unperturbed amid sorrows, whose thirst for pleasures has altogether disappeared, and who is free from passion, fear and anger, is called stable of mind. (56)

The saint who has realized God remains wholly unperturbed in sorrow. That is to say, his intellect having become unshakably fixed in God, even the greatest of sorrows cannot move him (VI.22); he becomes proof against all sorrows. If his body is cut to pieces by weapons, or is subjected to pain caused by unbearable heat, cold and rain and struck by lightning, or if he is overtaken by a severe disease, or suddenly loses his dearest object in the world, or is subjected to the worst form of ignominy, reproach and vilification without rhyme or reason, nay, if he has to undergo all other forms of extreme torture, anguish and suffering that may be imagined in this world, all at once, they will fail to produce the least perturbation in his mind. Therefore, the words he will utter will betray not the least trace of any anxiety or worry. If he shows any anxiety in his bodily expression or speech in imitation of the ways of the world, it is no anxiety in the real sense of the term.

Again, the mind of the God-realized soul has no thirst for pleasures of the world. That is to say, he takes pleasure and pain alike, and remains ever balanced in both these forms of experience (XII.13; XIV.24). Just as the greatest sorrow cannot shake the balance of his mind, even so the highest form of pleasure cannot induce the least thirst for it in his mind. That is why his words never express any form of thirst. If in order to imitate the ways of the world, he ever indicates through mind and speech a longing for any kind of pleasure, it is no real longing.

So passion, fear and anger have no place in the mind and speech of the God-realized soul. No occurrence of any kind can ever induce the least attachment, fear, or anger in his mind. Therefore, his speech also will be free from passion, fear and anger, and will exhibit both tranquillity and guileless simplicity. He may at any time for the sake of the world give expression to attachment, fear and anger through action of body and speech, yet they can never be swayed by any morbid feeling. It may be possible for a clever man, possessed of exceptional self-control, to use words which are altogether free from such feelings, but his mind cannot remain unaffected by such feelings. That is why, in the course of His reply to the question: "How does the God-realized soul speak ?" the Lord, instead of referring merely to his external speech, has given a description of the sentiments ruling his mind. This should make it clear to us that the speech of the Yogī, possessed of a stable mind, should be a faithful

index to the state of his mind, wholly pure and entirely free from morbidity.

He alone who possesses the above characteristics is a 'Muni' (one who has controlled his speech) in the true sense of the term; and his intellect alone has attained real stability. He whose mind and senses are diseased cannot be called a man of stable mind, even if his speech exhibits self-control and stability. This is what is meant by saying: "such a sage is stable of mind."

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम्।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता॥ ५७॥

यः who; **सर्वत्र** to everything; **अनभिस्नेहः** (is) unattached; **तत् तत्** this and that; **शुभाशुभम्** good and evil; **प्राप्य** meeting with; **न** not; **अभिनन्दति** rejoices; **न** nor; **द्वेष्टि** recoils; **तस्य** his; **प्रज्ञा** mind; **प्रतिष्ठिता** (is) stable.

He who is unattached to everything, and meeting with good and evil, neither rejoices nor recoils, his mind is stable. (57)

The expression "unattached to everything" shows in this verse that in the Yogī possessed of a stable mind worldly attachments of all kinds cease to exist. That is to say, whereas in men possessed of a worldly mind attachment and infatuation for wife, children, brothers, friends and relations etc., are natural, and the words that fall from their lips drop as expressions of their gross love and infatuation, such is not the case with the Yogī of stable mind. He does not love any creature with a feeling of mineness or attachment, for any being whatsoever. Hence his speech too is wholly free from the taint of attachment and is full of unalloyed love. Attachment is the root of morbid feelings like lust, anger etc. Therefore, when attachment itself is eradicated from his mind, all other morbid feelings too should be understood to have naturally ceased to exist.

The terms 'good' and 'evil' in this verse stand for what they call agreeable and disagreeable or favourable and unfavourable. To the Yogī possessed of a stable mind, nothing belonging to this world appear as favourable or unfavourable; therefore, the word 'good' should be taken to mean that which appears to be favourable to his mind, senses and body, while 'evil' signifies that which appears as unfavourable from the worldly point of view. The word 'Tat' has been used twice with reference to good and evil in order to show that such favourable and unfavourable objects in the world are infinite in number. When the Yogī comes in touch with any of them, he remains unaffected. That is what is intended to be brought out by the verse.

When an ordinary man of the world comes in contact with what appears as agreeable to him, his mind gets transported with joy. The joy of his mind finds expression through his words as well, and he offers praises to that agreeable object. But when the Yogī possessed of a stable mind comes in contact with what is most agreeable to him, his mind does not give way to the morbid feeling of joy (V.20). Therefore, his speech also remains altogether free from the morbid feeling of joy and he never offers to any agreeable object or being exaggerated praises gushing out of unrestrained pleasure. If for the sake of the world his body ever exhibits pleasure, or his words seem to offer praises, they are not under the sway of the morbid feeling of joy.

Just as the attainment of an agreeable

object reacts agreeably on the mind of the ordinary man of the world, even so he recoils from a disagreeable object, which produces a great distraction in his mind, and begins to denounce it in venomous words. In the mind of the Yogī possessed of stable intellect, however, not the least amount of hatred will be roused by contact with even the most disagreeable object. It will produce no distraction or perturbation in his mind. He will ever remain calm, unperturbed and equipoised, when coming in touch with anything beloning to this world (V.20). That is why he will never vindictively denounce or censure any disagreeable object or being. If, for the guidance of the world, such a saint ever denounces anything or any being, or employs words of censure with reference to it, they are not expressions of censure in the real sense of the term; for there exists no hatred in his mind for anything or any being.

He alone who is possessed of the marks stated above, that is to say, on whose mind and senses no occurrence of any kind and neither contact with, nor separation from, anything or any being whatsoever can produce an unhealthy reaction, should be regarded as a Yogī possessed of a stable mind.

It has already been pointed out that when Arjuna asked the Lord how a God-realized soul spoke, his question did not relate to external speech alone, as understood in the ordinary sense of the term. Had it been a question of words alone, any dissembler or hypocrite could learn by heart and use the best expressions to create an impression that he was a great spiritually developed soul. Really speaking, what matters is the sentiments that inspire one's speech. The Lord refers here to the speech which has for its background the mental state as described in these two verses. That is why instead of making any direct reference to speech, the Lord has described here the mental state of the God-realized soul.

Concluding thus the reply to the second question of Arjuna concerning the speech of the God-realized soul, the Lord now takes up his third question, viz., how the God-realized soul 'sits', and shows that his rest consists in complete control over the senses and their withdrawal from their respective objects, after being freed from all attachment and attraction for them.

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता॥ ५८॥

च and; यदा when; कूर्मः a tortoise; सर्वशः from all directions; अङ्गानि (draws in its) limbs; इव as; अयम् such (a man); इन्द्रियार्थेभ्यः from the sense-objects; इन्द्रियाणि (his) senses; संहरते withdraws; तस्य his; प्रज्ञा mind; प्रतिष्ठिता is stable.

When like a tortoise, which draws in its limbs from all directions, he withdraws his senses from the sense-objects, his mind is (should be considered as) stable. (58)

The verse speaks of withdrawing the senses, that are fully controlled, from all objects of sense-enjoyment at the time of meditation, and not allowing the senses to be attracted by those objects of enjoyment and by depriving them of their power to lead astray the mind and intellect. All this has been picturesquely described by comparing the process with the drawing in of the limbs of a tortoise from all directions, and its lying motionless like a piece of inert stone. If the functions of the different senses

are only externally stopped and they are withdrawn from contact with gross objects of enjoyment, internally the senses continue to function by constantly leaning towards the objects of enjoyment. That is why men generally in their dream state or reverie experience sense-enjoyments in their subtle form. The word 'Sarvaśaḥ' in the verse has been used to show that the man of a stable mind withdraws his senses from even such subtle enjoyments.

He alone who has controlled his senses thoroughly as shown above, and who is thus able to wean his senses from their objects completely can have a stable mind. He whose senses are not controlled, cannot have a stable intellect; for the senses will then forcibly drag his mind and intellect after them and lead them on to sense-enjoyments.

Replying to the third question of Arjuna, the preceding verse described how the God-realized soul rested. Now with a view to dealing with some supplementary problems arising out of that question, the next verse proceeds to bring out the distinction between sense-control as practised by the ordinary man and the sense control of the God-realized soul.

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते॥५९॥

निराहारस्य देहिनः from the abstemious soul; **विषयाः** sense-objects; **विनिवर्तन्ते** turn away; **रसवर्जम्** to the exclusion of the taste (for them); **अस्य** of him (the man of stable mind); **रसः** the taste; **अपि** also; **परम्** the Supreme; **दृष्ट्वा** on (his) seeing; **निवर्तते** disappears.

Sense-objects turn away from him, who does not enjoy them with his senses; but the taste for them persists. This relish also disappears in the case of the man of stable mind when he sees the Supreme. (59)

In the general acceptance of the term, the word 'Nirāhāra' is understood to mean one who gives up food and observes a complete fast. But the word has not been used in that sense in this verse, for the word 'Viṣayāḥ' used in plural shows that abstinence not only from food but from sense-enjoyments in general is meant here. Through the renunciation of food only one object of the senses, viz, taste, is given up; the other objects, namely, sound, touch, colour and smell are not renounced. Therefore, the word 'food' (Āhāra) should be understood in a wider sense; thus understood, every sense has its own 'food' in the shape of the object of its enjoyment. According to this interpretation the words 'Nirāhārasya Dehinaḥ' should be taken to mean that human being, identifying himself with the body, who has given up the enjoyment of all the objects of senses through his senses.

The verse shows that even the unenlightened man who has given up sense-enjoyments has outwardly withdrawn his senses from sense-objects, as the tortoise draws in its limbs; but his taste for such objects will persist,—his attachment for them will not disappear. That is why his senses will continue internally to run after those objects and will thus keep his mind oscillating. This is what is meant by the Lord when He says that though the sense-objects turn away from that man, the taste for them persists. The following illustrations will make the point clear.

For fear of ailment, or fear of death, or due to any other cause a man who is addicted to sense-enjoyment gives up the

enjoyment of one or more objects. For the time he abstains from the enjoyment of a particular object or objects, the object or objects practically cease to exist for him. Even so if he gives up the enjoyment of all objects, all objects will cease to exist for him for the time being; but such a renunciation, inspired as it is by constraint, fear or any other motive, is made notwith standing his attachment for those objects. Such a renunciation cannot bring about real cessation of attachment or attraction for the things of the world.

When a hypocrite, in order to deceive people, gives up outwardly all activities of the five senses of perception and the five organs of action, all objects of the senses will outwardly cease to exist for him; but owing to the persistence of attachment for those objects, he will mentally continue to dwell on them (III.6). Therefore, his attachment for those objects remains as strong as ever.

In order to attain mystic powers, or with a view to obtaining any other form of worldly enjoyment, a man desiring worldly happiness may externally renounce the activities of all the ten organs, and may cease to dwell on them even mentally at the time of meditation or when absorbed in Samādhi; and yet his attraction for sense-enjoyments will continue, his attachment for them will persist.

In this way, through outward renunciation of objects, the objects no doubt will cease to exist, but the attraction for them will not cease. Herein lies the distinction between restraint of the senses as practised by an ignorant man and that practised by a wise man.

Construing the word 'Rasa' as mental enjoyment, the word 'Rasavarjam' may be interpreted to mean that such a person though bodily renouncing objects of enjoyment mentally goes on enjoying the same; but inasmuch as such mental enjoyment presupposes attachment for the object of enjoyment, the interpretation of 'Rasa' as attachment covers this meaning as well. Secondly, mental enjoyment of objects of senses can be avoided even before God-realization with the help of a resolute will or discrimination or by recourse to reason; whereas the realization of God lays the axe at its very root, viz., attachment, and herein lies the fulfilment of God-realization, not merely in suspending enjoyment with the mind of objects of the senses. Therefore, the interpretation of the word 'Rasa' as given above is quite reasonable and proper.

The word 'Asya', in the second line of the verse, refers to the Yogī of stable mind, who is the subject of discussion in these verses. This second line of the verse says that inasmuch as the Yogī possessed of a stable mind obtains a direct vision of God, the ocean of supreme Bliss, he ceases to have the faintest trace of any attachment for worldly objects. For attachment for worldly objects proceeds from Nescience*, which disappears totally when there is a direct vision of God. It is only due to their infatuation that ordinary men of the world find happiness in sense-enjoyments; that is why they feel attracted towards sense-enjoyments, whereas in reality there lies not

* अविद्यास्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः क्लेशाः *(Yoga-Sūtras II.3)*

"Nescience, the knot between Spirit and Matter making Matter appear as Spirit, attachment, hatred and fear of death—these five are termed as the five Kleśas or sources of pain."

अविद्या क्षेत्रमुत्तरेषाम् *(Ibid. II.4)*

"Of these five, Nescience is the root of the following four, viz., egotism, partiality and prejudice etc."

the least happiness in sense-enjoyments. Whatever happiness is imagined to be derived from sense-enjoyments is nothing but a very faint reflection of a fraction of the Bliss which lies in God, the embodiment of supreme Bliss. Just as the light appearing in the moon that shines in a moon-lit night is nothing but a reflection of the sun's light, and with the rising of the sun the light of the moon disappears, even so the happiness which one finds in the possession and enjoyment of worldly objects is nothing but a reflection of the Bliss obtaining in the All-blissful God. Therefore he who realizes that embodiment of supreme Bliss, viz., God, neither finds any happiness in the enjoyment of worldly objects (II.69), nor feels even the least attraction from them.

For God is such a wonderful, transcendent and supernatural object of attraction that when He is actually realized, the soul feels so enchanted; enraptured and ravished that it losses its very identity. Who can in that state think of any other object ? That is why it has been said that on the realization of God all attachment for objects of enjoyment gets eradicated once for all.

Thus in the restraint of senses evinced by a man of realization it is not the sense-objects alone which turn away from him; nay, attachment itself with its root. Nescience, ceases, once for all. Herein lies the speciality of sense-restraint as practised by the Yogī possessed of a stable mind.

It may be asked here: Where lies the harm if this attachment does not disappear and if the senses are not restrained ? The next verse throws light on this point.

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः॥ ६०॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; हि for; प्रमाथीनि इन्द्रयाणि the turbulent senses; यततः विपश्चितः पुरुषस्य of the striving wise man; अपि even; मनः the mind; प्रसभम् forcibly; हरन्ति carry away.

Turbulent by nature, the senses even of a wise man, who is practising self-control, forcibly carry away his mind, Arjuna. (60)

Like a lamp placed over the threshold, which throws its light in rooms lying on both sides of the door, the word 'Hi' connects this verse with the verse preceding it as well as with the verse which follows it. The preceding verse showed that from him who merely renounced enjoyment of sense-objects, only sense-objects withdrew, but not the taste for their enjoyment. Here it may be asked: Where lies the harm if the taste for enjoyment does not disappear ? In answer to this, the present verse shows that so long as attachment for the enjoyment of sense-objects remains embedded in the heart of man, his senses will on account of that attachment forcibly lead him to the enjoyment of sense-objects; hence, his mind and intellect cannot rest stable in God. And because the senses thus forcibly carry away the mind of man, the Lord urges in the following verse that having controlled all the senses and collecting the mind and devoting oneself to Him, one should engage himself in the practice of meditation. In this way, the word 'Hi' establishes the connection of this verse with the verse immediately preceding it as well as the verse which succeeds it.

The adjective 'turbulent' has been used with 'senses' to demonstrate the fact that so long as the senses of a man are not subdued by him, and so long as his attachment for objects of the senses persists, his senses will

continue to tempt his mind towards sense-enjoyments and will not allow it to attain stability; they will continue to churn the mind and make it restless.

The word 'Puruṣasya' with its two adjectives 'Yatataḥ' and 'Vipaścitaḥ' refers to the clever and devoted Sādhaka, who from his study of the scriptures and by exercising his independent judgement and discrimination has become aware of the evils of sense-enjoyment, and who though striving to restrain the senses from their objects has not yet succeeded in overcoming his attachment for sense-objects and has consequently not been able to subdue his senses. The word 'Api' is intended to show that when the unruly senses taking advantage of his attachment for sense-enjoyments forcibly lead the mind of even an intelligent and diligent Sādhaka, possessed of discrimination, to the enjoyment of sense-objects, there is no wonder that the generality of men should be found indulging in their senses. Therefore, he who desires to attain the state of a Yogī possessed of a stable mind should make special efforts to control his senses, totally renouncing attachment for objects of the world.

Thus demonstrating the necessity of practising sense-control the Lord points out the duty of a Sādhaka, and in the end declares again that sense-control is a means of attaining the state of a God-realized soul possessed of a stable mind.

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता॥ ६१ ॥

सर्वाणि all; तानि them; संयम्य having controlled; युक्तः with his mind fully collected; मत्परः devoting (oneself heart and soul) to Me; आसीत should sit down (for meditation); हि for; यस्य whose; इन्द्रियाणि senses; वशे (are brought) under control; तस्य his; प्रज्ञा mind; प्रतिष्ठिता (has become) stable.

Therefore, having controlled them all and collecting his mind one should sit for meditation, devoting oneself heart and soul to Me. For he, whose senses are mastered, is known to have a stable mind. (61)

In order to show that control should be exercised over all the senses, the adjective 'Sarvāṇi' has been used to qualify the word 'senses' in this verse. For even one undisciplined sense distracts the mind and intellect of a Sādhaka and places obstacles in the path of his spiritual progress (II.67). Therefore, a Sādhaka who seeks God-realization should carefully and diligently subdue all his senses.

After subduing the senses if the mind is not brought under control, it will dwell on objects of the world and bring about the fall of the Sādhaka; and the mind and intellect, unless they are fixed on God, cannot rest stable. That is why the present verse advises the Sādhaka to sit for the practice of meditation on God, collecting his scattered mind, and devoting himself heart and soul to God. The same advice has been given in Chapter VI also in the course of the description of Dhyānayoga (VI.14). The Sādhaka who having subdued mind and senses engages himself in the practice of meditation will soon attain stability of intellect, which will bring him within easy reach of God-realization.

The first half of this verse advises the Sādhaka to control his senses, collect his scatter mind and sit for meditation devoting

himself heart and soul to God. The second half shows the reason why he should do so. Therefore, when it says: "he whose senses are mastered is known to have a stable mind," it should be taken to mean that totally renouncing all attachment, sense of possession and desire, and controlling the mind and senses, the intellect should be fixed on God. For that Sādhaka alone can keep his intellect steadfast on God, whose mind and senses are subdued; he whose mind and senses have not been brought under control will never succeed in keeping his intellect stable. It is, therefore, extremely necessary for every human being to bring his mind and senses under complete control.

The next two verses show the harm which befalls a man if he fails to control his mind and senses, and to devote himself heart and soul to God.

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते।
सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते॥ ६२॥

विषयान् sense-objects; **ध्यायतः** dwelling on; **पुंसः** of the man; **तेषु** to them; **सङ्गः** attachment; **उपजायते** springs up; **सङ्गात्** from attachment; **कामः** desire; **सञ्जायते** is born; **कामात्** from desire (unfulfilled); **क्रोधः** anger; **अभिजायते** ensues.

The man dwelling on sense-objects develops attachment for them; from attachment springs up desire, and from desire (unfulfilled) ensure anger. (62)

He who finds pleasure and attraction in the enjoyments of the world, who has no control over the mind and does not meditate on God, lacking as he does love for and dependence on God, will go on dwelling in his mind on the objects of senses. Thus ever meditating on the objects of the senses, he develops deep attachment for those objects of enjoyment. Then he loses all self-control, and his mind becomes restless. All these ideas are included in the brief statement of the Lord that "the man dwelling on sense-objects develops attachment for them."

It is out of question for those who have already realized God to develop attachment by dwelling on sense-objects. By saying: "with the realization of the Supreme, their relish for objects of the world disappears," the Lord has already pointed out the total absence of attachment in them. In the case of others, however, it is liable to appear in a more or less pronounced form.

By constantly dwelling on objects of enjoyment man develops an intensive form of attachment for them. This awakens in his mind a keen desire to obtain various forms of enjoyment. This is what is meant by attachment giving rise to desire. And when some hindrance appears in the fulfilment of this desire, he develops hatred for the cause of this hindrance, and the hatred is transformed into anger. This is what is meant by desire producing anger.

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति॥ ६३॥

क्रोधात् from anger; **सम्मोहः** infatuation; **भवति** arises; **सम्मोहात्** from infatuation; **स्मृतिविभ्रमः** confusion of memory; **स्मृतिभ्रंशात्** from confusion of memory; **बुद्धिनाशः** loss of reason; **बुद्धिनाशात्** from loss of reason; **प्रणश्यति** (one) goes to complete ruin.

From anger arises infatuation; from infatuation, confusion of memory; from confusion of memory, loss of reason; and from loss of reason one goes to complete ruin. (63)

When anger is aroused in the heart of a man, it deprives him of his power of discrimination. He is unable to weigh the *pros and cons* of a question. He will not heed the consequences of whatever he does in a fit of anger. Such is the nature of infatuation caused by anger.

When this infatuation grows, one's memory gets confused; man forgets in what relationship he stands with those around him, what he should do and what he should not, how he had planned to do a thing, and what he is actually doing now. He is thus unable to carry out his premeditated plans as his memory of the past is torn asunder. Such is the confusion of memory produced by infatuation.

When memory is confused in the above manner, the mind finds itself unable to determine what one should do, and what one should not. This is what is meant by loss of reason. When a man is reduced to this state, it becomes easy for him to give up the path of duty and to follow the forbidden path. Such a man will exhibit acrimony, harshness, pusillanimity, violence, vindictiveness, wretchedness, stupidity, silliness and many other evil traits in his behaviour. He is thus soon degraded from his previous state of existence and is thrown after death into wombs of various sub-human species or into the infernal regions. That is how loss of reason brings about his complete ruin.

Detailing thus the process of fall of the individual who has no control over his mind and senses, the Lord while commencing His reply to the fourth question of Arjuna, viz., how the Yogī of stable mind walks, first explains in the following two verses how a Sādhaka who has control over his mind and senses moves among sense-objects, and what is his reward.

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन्।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति॥ ६४॥

तु but; विधेयात्मा the self-controlled striver; आत्मवश्यैः disciplined by the mind; रागद्वेषवियुक्तैः free from likes and dislikes; इन्द्रियैः through (his) senses; विषयान् the (various) sense-objects; चरन् enjoying; प्रसादम् placidity (of mind); अधिगच्छति attains.

But the self-controlled Sādhaka, while enjoying the various sense-objects through his senses, which are disciplined and free from likes and dislikes, attains placidity of mind. (64)

The foregoing verses contained a description of the process of fall of the individual who had no control over his mind and senses, and the present verse as well as the next are devoted to a description of the reverse process of spiritual ascent of the Sādhaka who has control over the senses and the mind and has no attachment for the world. The word 'Tu' in this verse has been used to bring out this distinction.

The compound word 'Vidheyātmā' refers to the Sādhaka whose mind has been properly disciplined and subdued. The senses of all ordinary men of the world are wayward and do not submit to their control. They are always guided by likes and dislikes. Therefore, he who enjoys the objects of senses as a slave of these senses, tries by

fair or foul means to accumulate such objects and enjoy them, and entertaining likes or dislikes for such enjoyments, feels either happy or miserable. He does not experience any spiritual joy. But the senses of the self-controlled Sādhaka remain under his control, and are free from likes and dislikes; he, therefore, moves among sense-enjoyments obtained as his due in accordance with his order in society, stage in life and circumstances, without being swayed by likes and dislikes. All the activities of his senses, i.e., whatever he sees and hears, whatever words he utters, the diet he takes, his sleep and waking hours, his moving to and from and the various postures of his body—all these are regulated and disciplined and are carried on strictly in conformity with the injuctions of the scriptures. All his activities are free from likes and dislikes, and such passions as lust, anger and greed, etc. This is what is meant by his enjoying the various sense-objects through senses which are disciplined and free from likes and dislikes.

In verse 59 it was stated that pending realization of God attachment for objects of the world does not disappear; and the present verse says that stability of mind can be attained after acquiring placidity through enjoyment of sense-objects divorced from likes and dislikes. Therefore, it appears from this verse that likes and dislikes can be overcome even before God-realization. In this way though the two statements appear to be mutually contradictory, in reality there is no conflict btetween them. Verse 59 speaks of total extinction of attachment and aversion, while the present verse tells us the process of eradicating attachment and aversion by speaking of enjoying sensuous pleasures through senses freed from likes and dislikes. Verse 40 of Chapter III declares the senses, mind and intellect as the seat of desire. This proves that even though the senses may be free from likes and dislikes, the latter may lurk in a subtle form in the mind and intellect of the Sādhaka. Verse 59 above, however, shows that attachment and aversion are wholly absent in a man who is stable of mind, not that his senses alone are free from likes and dislikes.

Preventing the contact of the senses with their objects or external renunciation of sense-objects, control of the senses, and freeing the senses from likes and dislikes—all these are helpful in God-realization. But of these three processes control of the senses is more useful than, and superior to, external renunciation of objects, whereas freeing the senses from likes and dislikes is even more useful than, and superior to, sense-control.

Though external renunciation of sense-objects too is no doubt helpful in God-realization, nevertheless so long as the senses are not disciplined, and likes and dislikes are not overcome, mere external renunciation of sense-enjoyments will neither enable one to get rid of sense-objects completely nor to achieve any tangible results, nor is it a fact that sense-control is impossible of attainment without external renunciation of sense-objects. For control of the senses can be easily accomplished through other practices like offering adoration and service to God, repetition of the Divine Name etc.; and after the attainment of sense-control, renunciation of sense-enjoyments becomes easy. He whose senses are disciplined, and under his control, can renounce any object whenever he likes. That is why sense-control is more important than external renunciation of sense-enjoyments.

In this way control of the senses is also helpful in God-realization; but without

freeing the senses from likes and dislikes mere sense-control will not enable one to get rid of sense-objects completely and thereby realize God. Nor is it a fact that freedom of the sense from likes and dislikes is impossible without external renunciation of sense-objects or control of the senses. By realizing the evanescence of worldly enjoyments through association with saints, self-study and reflection, as well as by God's grace and practising meditation and Japa etc. likes and dislikes can be overcome; and he whose senses are free from likes and dislikes will find it easy to renounce external objects and discipline his senses as a matter of course. He who is free from likes and dislikes with regard to the objects of the senses can realize God even though moving among them. That is why freedom of the senses from likes and dislikes is more important than, and superior to, both external renunciation of sense-enjoyments and discipline of the senses.

Proper use of one's disciplined senses, without being swayed by likes and dislikes, renders the heart of the Sādhaka pure and transparent; that is why it enjoys spiritual bliss and an abiding peace and tranquillity (XVIII.37); it is that joy and tranquillity which is referred to here by the word 'Prasādam' (placidity of mind). Purity of heart, which is the direct cause of this joy and tranquillity, and food offered to God, which is conducive to purity of heart, are also signified by the term 'Prasāda.' But inasmuch as the next verse speaks of a man who has attained this 'Prasāda' as 'Prasannacetasaḥ', possessed of a tranquil mind, it appears but reasonable to interpret the word 'Prasādam' occurring in this verse as signifying placidity of mind or spiritual joy.

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते॥ ६५॥

प्रसादे with the attainment of placidity (of mind); अस्य सर्वदुःखानाम् of all his sorrows; हानिः cessation; उपजायते takes place; प्रसन्नचेतसः of (such) a person of tranquil mind; बुद्धिः the intellect; हि indeed; आशु soon; पर्यवतिष्ठते (withdrawing itself from all sides) is firmly established (in God).

With the attainment of such placidity of mind, all his sorrows come to an end; and the intellect of such a person of tranquil mind, soon withdrawing itself from all sides, becomes firmly established in God. (65)

Sorrow is the direct outcome of sin. When the sins of man are washed away through the practice of Karmayoga, the heart gets purified, and a pure heart alone can experience the Sāttvika spiritual joy referred to above. Hence it is but reasonable to say that Sāttivika joy terminates all sorrow (XVIII.36-37).

The various forms of suffering which men of the world undergo are directly traceable to loss of agreeable objects, or contact with disagreeable objects, and may be classified under three heads, viz., (1) Ādhyātmika or arising from bodily or mental distemper; (2) Ādhidaivika or arising from outward natural causes; and (3) Ādhibhautika, caused by other animals and men. The word 'Duḥkhānām' in this verse refers to all these forms of suffering. Loss of, or contact with any object fails to bring sorrow to the Sādhaka who has tasted of the Sāttvika spiritual joy mentioned above. He ever remains

steeped in joy and bliss. This is what is meant by the cessation of all sorrows.

The second half of the verse shows that when the heart of the Sādhaka becomes pure, and he succeeds in attaining the joy of the spirit, his mind will not give up that joy and tranquillity even for a moment. All the distractions of his mind, therefore, disappear, and his intellect soon gets firmly established in God. Nothing remains in his consciousness except God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

Although the question of Arjuna did not relate to the Sādhaka, he was himself a Sādhaka in the spiritual path, whom the Lord was seeking to elevate to the state of a perfect Yogī. Therefore, in order to give him a clear idea of how a Yogī of stable mind conducts himself, the Lord has first spoken of the way in which a Sādhaka conducts himself, and finally concludes the subject in verse 71, describing the ways of conduct of the Yogī who has attained perfection. A complete answer to Arjuna's question is contained in the concluding verse, while these verses serve as an introduction to the same. Therefore, it is but reasonable to hold that the answer to Arjuna's fourth question commences from this verse.

Having described thus how the Sādhaka who, having subdued the mind and the senses, moves among sense-objects without attachment attains joy, tranquillity and the stable mind of a perfect Yogī, the Lord proceeds in the following two verses to show the other side of the picture, viz., how the worldly man whose mind and senses are uncontrolled remains debarred from happiness and tranquillity, and the process how his intellect gets distracted through association with worldly objects.

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम्॥ ६६ ॥

अयुक्तस्य of him who has not been able to control his mind; **बुद्धिः** (determinate) reason; **नास्ति** (there) is not; **न च** nor (there is); **अयुक्तस्य** of him who has not controlled his mind; **भावना** thought (of God); **न च** nor again; **अभावयतः** of the unthinking man; **शान्तिः** (there can be) peace; **अशान्तस्य** of one lacking peace of mind; **सुखम्** happiness; **कुतः** how (can there be).

He who has not controlled his mind and senses can have no reason; nor can such an undisciplined man think of God. The unthinking man can have no peace; and how can there be happiness for one lacking peace of mind ? (66)

The word 'Ayuktasya' in the present verse refers to the sensually-minded man lacking in judgment and discrimination, who has no control over his mind and senses, and who is strongly attached to enjoyment of the senses; while 'Buddhi' (reason) signifies the determinate and one-pointed intellect referred to in verse 41. By saying that the worldly man mentioned above, lacks this intellect, the Lord indicates that due to attachment and desire for various forms of enjoyment the mind of such a man is ever distracted; that is why he cannot rightly determine his duty, and establish his intellect in God. Such an undisciplined man, who is a slave of his mind and senses, not only lacks the 'determinate reason'; what is worse, he cannot even think of God. To say nothing of establishing his mind and intellect in God, his strong attachment for worldly objects does not allow him even to think of God; his mind remains

constantly engrossed in thoughts of the world and its enjoyments.

By saying that the man lacking self-control can have no peace of mind, it is intended to show that inasmuch as he does not think of God, the ocean of supreme bliss and tranquillity, the mind of the worldly man remains ever distracted, and his heart remains constantly burning and agitated under the impulse of love and hatred, lust and anger, greed and jealousy, etc. Therefore, his mind knows no peace. And without peace of mind, there can be no happiness. That is to say, unless the mind is tranquil, true happiness cannot make its appearance. The happiness which is erroneously imagined to be derived from contact between the senses and their objects, or from sleep, sloth and carelessness is no happiness in the real sense of the term. Being conducive to sorrow, such a happiness is nothing but sorrow.

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मोऽनुविधीयते।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि॥ ६७॥

हि because; अम्भसि upon the waters; नावम् a boat; वायुः इव as the wind (carries away); चरताम् इन्द्रियाणाम् of the moving senses (among sense-objects); यत् अनु joined to which; मनः the mind; विधीयते remains; तत् that sense (alone); अस्य of him (the man lacking self-control); प्रज्ञाम् discrimination; हरति takes away.

As the wind carries away a boat upon the waters, even so of the senses moving among sense-objects, the one to which the mind is joined takes away his discrimination. **(67)**

The preceding verse stated that the man who lacked self-control could neither have determinate reason, nor thought of God, nor again peace of mind, nor happiness. In order to make this point clearer, the present verse gives the reasons for this. This is brought out by the word 'Hi', which is indicative of cause.

In the simile employed in this verse, Buddhi or the faculty of discrimination has been compared to a boat; the sense to which the mind is joined has been likened to the wind; the world has been compared to the ocean and the various objects of the senses, viz., sound, touch, colour, taste and smell, are compared to the waters of the ocean. A strong wind may react on a boat proceeding towards its destination in two ways. The boat may be diverted from its proper course to be tossed about in the high seas, with the huge breakers washing its deck, or it may capsize and sink. But if an expert sailor can manipulate the sail so as to make the wind favourable to him, the boat can no longer be driven away from its course; on the contrary, the wind will help it to reach its goal. Similarly, if a man whose mind and senses are not disciplined endeavours to fix his intellect on God, his senses dragging the mind along with them may react on his intellect in two ways. Drawing it away from God, they may employ it in devising means of acquiring various objects of enjoyment, or they may lead it to sinful pursuits and bring about its degradation. But they fail to divert the intellect of the man whose mind and senses are disciplined; on the other hand, they help the intellect to reach its destined goal, viz., God. Verses 64 and 65 have argued the same thing that has been propounded here.

The verse speaks of any one sense to

which the mind is joined vitiating the judgment of an individual, and not the combination of all the senses. This is intended to bring out the powerful nature of the senses. It means that there is nothing to be wondered at if all the senses acting together succeed in diverting the intellect of an individual, when even one sense to which the mind is joined is quite sufficient to entrap it in the snare of sense-enjoyments and divert it from its proper course. We come across typical instances of a single sense bringing about the destruction of a being. The deer meets its death for lack of control over the sense of hearing; the elephant meets its doom through lack of control over the sense of touch, the moth perishes through lack of conrol over sight, the fish loses its life through lack of control over taste, and the bee dies for lack of control over smell. Even so the intellect of man can be diverted from its course by a single sense to which the mind lends its support.

The sixth case-ending in the word 'Indriyāṇām' has been used to denote selection out of a lot (अवधारण). Therefore, the relative pronoun 'Yat' (which) should be taken to refer to that one among the senses, to which the mind is joined. And since the two pronouns 'Yat' and 'Tat' (that) are correlated, the word 'Tat' also should be taken to refer to the sense which is singled out. In the phrase 'Anu Vidhīyate', 'Anu' is not a prefix, but an indeclinable belonging to the class known as 'Karmapravacanīyas'' and serving the purpose of a preposition; hence the second case-ending has been used with reference to the relative pronoun 'Yat', and the verb 'Vidhīyate' being of an active-cum-passive form, its very object 'Manaḥ' (mind) has been used as a subject in the nominative case. Again, the next verse is introduced with the word 'Tasmāt' (therefore) and speaks of him whose senses are disciplined as possessed of a stable mind; for this reason also it appears but reasonable to interpret the pronouns 'Yat' and 'Tat' as referring to the one 'sense' and not to the word 'Manaḥ'.

It will not be out of place to point out in this connection that without being joined by the mind, a sense by itself has not the power to carry away the intellect; but the mind by itself, without the help of any sense, is capable of dragging the intellect and warping its judgment.

Showing thus how the intellect of a worldly-minded man who has no control over his senses and mind is diverted, the Lord proceeds in the following verse to emphasize again the indispensability of sense-control for attaining stability of mind, and describes the state of the Yogī who is possessed of a stable mind.

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता॥ ६८॥

तस्मात् therefore; महाबाहो O mighty-armed Arjuna; यस्य whose; इन्द्रियाणि senses; इन्द्रियार्थेभ्यः from (the various) sense-objects; सर्वशः निगृहीतानि are completely restrained; तस्य his; प्रज्ञा mind; प्रतिष्ठिता (is) stable.

Therefore, Arjuna, he, whose senses are completely restrained from their objects, is said to have a stable mind. **(68)**

The preceding verse stated that the undisciplined senses of that worldly-minded man who lacks self-control, entrapping his mind in the snare of sense-enjoyments,

divert his intellect and do not allow it to remain steadfast and firm. The word 'Tasmāt' has been used at the beginning of this verse to show that the mind and senses, therefore, needs must be controlled.

He who possesses long, stout and powerful arms is called a 'Mahābāhu'. This form of address is indicative of heroic qualities in the object of address. By using the word with reference to Arjuna, the Lord intended to point out to him that he was a foremost hero and a great fighter, therefore it should not be difficult for him to subdue his mind and senses and tame them.

It is the nature of senses like the sense of hearing etc., to run after their corresponding objects, viz., sound, touch, taste, sight and smell, without any hitch. Because the embodied soul has gone on uninterruptedly enjoying the objects of senses through these senses from time without beginning, the senses have developed a natural attraction for them. To stop once for all this natural inclination of the senses to run after sense-objects, to change their character of hankering after sense-enjoyments, to eradicate their attachment for sense-objects, and to rob them of their power to distract the mind and the intellect—this is what is meant by restraining them completely from their objects. When the man who has thus disciplined his senses suspends their activities during meditation, those senses during that state of suspension can neither perceive their corresponding objects, nor produce any distraction in the mind by their subtle impulses. They get merged in the mind as it were for the time being, and when on the conclusion of meditation the meditator re-awakens to consciousness of the external world and resumes the activities of his senses, they perform their function regularly by perceiving their corresponding objects without feeling the least attachment for them. They can no longer drag the mind with them; on the other hand, they will follow the lead of the mind itself in every matter. When for the guidance of the world the Yogī of stable mind considers it advisable to enjoy a particular sense-object approved of by the scriptures, and with that end in view allows a particular sense to function for a certain period of time, that sense alone will enjoy that object and no other for that definite period; no other sense can obtrude itself against his will and freely enjoy any other object. Thus acquiring complete mastery over the senses, and making them subservient by fully depriving them of their freedom of action is what is meant by complete restraint of the senses from their objects.

Although the text of the second half of verse 58 is identical with that of the second half of this verse, they have been interpreted in a slightly different way because of the difference in the first halves of the two verses. In verse 58, while replying to Arjuna's third question as to how the Yogī of stable mind sits, the Lord described the inactive state of the God-realized soul and employed the illustration of the drawing in of limbs of the tortoise to explain how he withdraws his senses from sense-objects. Though the senses can be externally withdrawn from the sense-objects even by an ordinary worldly-minded man, the withdrawal referred to there is a special type of withdrawal, inasmuch as it constitutes characteristic of the Yogī of stable mind. Control of the mind and senses which are free from attachment is also covered by this withdrawal. In the present verse, however, the Lord is describing the natural state of the stable-minded Yogī; hence the word used here with reference to the senses is 'Nigṛhītāni' meaning that the senses are restrained or controlled. Such a complete

restraint of the senses is possible only when they have no attachment for sense-enjoyments. The prefix 'Ni' and the adverb 'Sarvaśaḥ' also support this interpretation. Thus, though there is no difference between the actual spiritual level of the persons referred to in the two verses, the former of the two verses deals with the 'inactive' state of the stable-minded Yogī, while the latter shows his natural level of existence; that is the only difference.

In conclusion, the verse points out that he alone who has in the above manner subdued all his senses together with the mind possesses a stable mind; he whose mind and senses are not restrained and controlled will not be able to steady his mind and intellect.

Thus having shown, on the one hand, the harm accruing from indulgence of the mind and senses, and on the other, the advantages following from the practice of their restraint, and having emphasized the fact that in order to attain the state of the stable-minded Yogī it is indispensable to practise restraint of the senses and mind, overcoming likes and dislikes, the Lord described the state of such a Yogī. The Lord now proceeds to describe the natural states of the ordinary worldly-minded man and the Yogī of stable mind who has realized God through control of his mind and senses, bringing out their difference by means of the illustration of day and night.

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ ६९ ॥

सर्वभूतानाम् to all beings; या (that) which; निशा (is) night; संयमी the God-realized Yogī; तस्याम् in that state (of Divine Knowledge and supreme Bliss); जागर्ति keeps awake; यस्याम् in which; भूतानि (all) beings; जाग्रति keep awake; पश्यतः मुनेः to the seer; सा that (state of transient worldly happiness); निशा (is) night.

That which is night to all beings, in that state (of Divine Knowledge and supreme Bliss) the God-realized Yogī keeps awake. And that (the ever-changing, transient worldly happiness) in which all beings keep awake is night to the seer. (69)

The word 'Saṁyamī' in this verse refers to the Yogī who having controlled the mind and senses has realized God, and who has been referred to in this chapter as the Yogī possessed of a stable mind. This is borne out by the fact that in the second half of the verse he has been spoken of as 'Paśyataḥ', which means one who is illumined, a seer.

The experiences of the ignorant man of the world and the man of Knwoledge are as widely divergent as night and day; in order to bring out this truth the metaphor of the night has been employed in this verse to describe the states of the ignorant and the enlightened. Therefore, the word 'night' in this verse should not be taken in its literal sense to mean the dark period following sunset. It has been used in a metaphorical sense and conveys the idea of darkness resulting from obstruction of vision. Just as the owl due to some thing inherent in its vision sees only darkness even when the day is fully bright, even so the man without discrimination cannot see the self-luminous, eternally conscious and supremely blissful God owing to his vision of discrimination and knowledge being obstructed by the veil of ignorance hanging from time without beginning on his mind's

eye. The direct experience of supreme tranquillity and eternal bliss resulting from the dawning of the sun of God-realization, though luminous as the bright day, is as night to men of ignorance who have no knowledge of the virtues, glory, mystery and truth of God; for they have shut their eyes to it, and have no idea of what that experience of supreme Bliss is like. It is this state of God-realization that is referred to as 'night' in the first half of the verse, and which though 'night' to all beings, is like daylight to the God-realized Yogī. The fact that the stable-minded Yogī, having realized the true nature of God, constantly dwells in Him has been metaphorically described here as his keeping awake in that state which appears as 'night' to all beings.

Though every enjoyment of this world and the next is perishable, momentary, transient and full of suffering, yet enveloped as he is by the darkness of ignorance from time without beginning, the worldly-minded man regards it as everlasting, and full of joy. To him, there is no joy greater than the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. Thus attached to sense-enjoyments, the generality of men are found constantly striving to obtain objects of enjoyment and find pleasure in obtaining them. This is what is meant by all beings keeping awake in them. The joy derived from contact of the senses with their objects, or from carelessness, sloth and slumber, being enveloped in the darkness of ignorance, is, in reality, dark as night. Nevertheless ignorant beings keep awake in it, viewing it as day-light, even as a sleeping man while dreaming feels in his dream that he is awake. But even as a man awakened from the dream state ceases to have any connection with the dream world, the God-realized man of wisdom is conscious of nothing else than God, who is the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. In place of this visible world he sees only its foundation or substratum, viz., God. Therefore, all enjoyments of the world and the joy derived from such enjoyments are as night to him.

Showing thus, through the metaphor of the night, the difference between the man of wisdom and the unenlightened ignorant soul, the Lord now employs the simile of the ocean in order to show that the man of Knowledge attains supreme peace, whereas the ignorant man, seeking worldly enjoyments, does not.

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत्।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥ ७० ॥

यद्वत् as; आपः the waters (of different rivers); आपूर्यमाणम् brimming on all sides; अचलप्रतिष्ठम् undisturbed (from its position); समुद्रम् the ocean; प्रविशन्ति enter; तद्वत् likewise; सर्वे all; कामाः enjoyments; यम् (in) whom; प्रविशन्ति merge themselves; सः he; शान्तिम् peace; आप्नोति attains; कामकामी he who hankers after (such) enjoyments; न (does) not.

As the waters of different rivers enter the ocean, which though full on all sides remains undisturbed, likewise he in whom all enjoyments merge themselves attains peace; not he who hankers after such enjoyments. (70)

The real state of the God-realized soul cannot be fully described by comparing it with anything belonging to this material world; and yet it may be possible by means of a simile to give at least a partial idea of that transcendent state. Thus the simile of the ocean employed in this verse may be understood to mean that just as the ocean is

full of unfathomable water, even so the stable minded God-realized Yogī is full of infinite joy. Just as the ocean requires no water, even so the man of knowledge requires no worldly enjoyment; he is fully satiated. Just as the sea is immovable and knows no spate even when tossed by a tornado or gale and even though all the rivers discharge their waters into it, even so the Yogī who has established himself in union with God remains immovable and unshaken under all circumstances. The greatest tragedy of life or the greatest worldly loss, on the one hand, and the greatest cause of worldly joy or the removal of the greatest cause of worldly sorrow, on the other, will not make the least difference in his mental equilibrium. Established in God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, he remains ever immovable in one state of mental existence, untouched by any modification whatsoever.

The word 'Kāmāḥ, in this verse does not mean desires, but objects of desire, according to the derivation 'काम्यन्ते इति कामाः'. 'Sarve Kāmāḥ', therefore, means 'all objects of enjoyment'. Since the desires of a stable-minded Yogī have altogether ceased, it will be quite meaningless to say that desires enter into such a Yogī. Hence the interpretation of the word 'Kāmāḥ' as 'desires' will be wholly unwarranted. Even though the ocean requires no water, countless streams of water continue to enter it; yet they fail to occasion any flood or spate in the ocean, as sudden accession of water does in rivers and lakes. The ocean neither leaves its position nor crosses its boundary line; on the other hand, all the water that flows into it gets absorbed in it without producing any change in it. Even so though the God-realized Yogī has not the least use for any object of worldly enjoyment, various forms of worldly enjoyment continue to flow to him under the impulse of his Prārabdha or destiny. In other words, according to his Prārabdha, his mind, intellect and senses continue to come in contact with various objects, both agreeable and disagreeable; yet they fail to produce any unhealthy reaction on his mind in the shape of joy or grief, attraction or repulsion, lust or anger, greed or infatuation, fear or anxiety, or shake him from his immovable state or make him transgress the bounds of the scriptures. That is to say, the contact with those objects does not cause the least disturbance in his mental equilibrium, and without creating any agitation in his mind, they lose their identity in his blissful state of existence. This is what is meant by their merging into the God-realized Yogī, even as the waters of the rivers merge into the ocean; and the interpretation of 'Kāmāḥ' as 'objects of enjoyment' fits in with this explanation.

The statement that "Such a Yogī alone attains peace, and not he who hankers after enjoyments", is intended to show that the Yogī whose desires are thus set at rest, who has not the least use for any object of enjoyment, to whom objects of enjoyment come under the impulse of Prārabdha, and lose their identity, and who does not himself entertain any desire for enjoyment, he alone attains supreme peace; whereas the man who craves for enjoyments never attains peace. For the mind of the latter ever remains distracted by cravings of various kinds. And where there is distraction there can be no peace. Worry, heart-burning and sorrow have their permanent habitation there.

The reply to the third question of Arjuna as to how the stable-minded Yogī sits was commenced by the Lord in verse 58 and concluded in verse 61, as is indicated by the use of the word 'Āsīta' (sits) in that latter verse. Thereafter, in verses 62 and 63 the Lord incidentally pointed out how

indulgence in the thoughts of worldly enjoyments brings about one's downfall by developing attachment for them and then commenced His reply to the fourth question of Arjuna from verse 64. The use of the word 'Caran' used in that verse clearly brings out this departure in the line of thought. In the course of this reply, the simile of the boat upon the waters being carried away by the wind has been employed in verse 67 to show how even one of the wandering senses of the worldly-minded man takes away his discrimination. The word 'Caratām' has been used in that verse as well.

Besides, the present verse says that all enjoyments enter him and merge themselves in him. In the inactive state, all the doors through which the enjoyments enter the mind of the Yogī remain closed, inasmuch as his senses are devoid of contact with sense-objects in that state. But in the state to which the present verse refers, the senses continue to function; that is why objects of enjoyment can enter him. In this state he is unshakably established in God, but not 'inactive' so far as the world is concerned. Therefore, it is but reasonable to hold that the present verse contains the Lord's reply to the fourth question of Arjuna.

The fourth question of Arjuna, viz., how the stable-minded Yogī walks, related to the God-realized saint alone; but inasmuch as it had direct relation with conduct, the Lord pointed out in reply to that question in verses 64 to 70 the conduct which speedily enables a man to attain stability of mind, as well as the conduct which shuts out the possibility of attaining that state, and also the actual state of the man who has attained such stability. The next verse contains a direct reply to the fourth question of Arjuna and describes the mode of conduct of the stable-minded Yogī.

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति॥ ७१॥

यः पुमान् the man who; सर्वान् all; कामान् desires; विहाय giving up; निर्ममः free from the feeling of 'mine'; निरहङ्कारः free from egoism; निःस्पृहः free from yearning; चरति moves; सः he; शान्तिम् peace; अधिगच्छति attains.

He who has given up all desires, and moves free from attachment, egoism and thirst for enjoyment attains peace. (71)

The word 'Kāmān' taken with the adjective 'Sarvān', means the cravings of all kinds for any form of enjoyment of this world and the next; and to rid oneself completely once for all of all such cravings is what is meant by 'giving up all desires', in this verse.

The ordinary, ignorant man of the world identifies himself with the gross body, in which are included the mind, intellect and senses. That is why he regards the body as his self and cannot conceive of his existence apart from the body; and that is why he feels happy or miserable with the happiness or otherwise of the body. This form of identification with the body is known as 'Ahaṅkāra' or egoism. And he who has no such identification with the body is called 'Nirahaṅkāraḥ'.

Again, the worldly-minded, ignorant man entertains the feeling of 'mine' with regard to his gross body, including the mind, intellect and the senses, and in respect of all beings and things related to the body,

viz., wife, progeny, brothers, relations and friends, and house, property and power, etc. He has the same feeling in respect of all the activities of the body, and the enjoyments that are derived as a reward for such activities. He regards all these as his own. Such a feeling of 'mine' is known by the term 'Mamatā', or attachment. The word 'Nirmamaḥ', therefore, means one who has no such feeling of 'mine' in respect of anything whatsoever or calls nothing as his own.

The feeling of want or indispensability in respect of something which is agreeable and which one does not have is known as 'Spṛhā', or yearning for the same. The word 'Niḥspṛhaḥ', therefore, means one who has no such want or yearning, 'Spṛhā' is a subtler form of desire, hence separate mention has been made of its renunciation, as apart from the renunciation of desires which are referred to by the word 'Kāmān.'

He who moves among the objects of senses, that is to say, he who carries on all the activities of the body, mind and senses, which are approved of by the scriptures, such as seeing and hearing, taking of food, sleeping and waking etc., according to one's order in society, stage in life, nature and circumstances, just for the sake of guidance of the world and remaining free from egoism, attachment and yearning is said to be "moving in the world free from egoism, attachment and thirst for enjoyment and renouncing all desires".

'Spṛhā' being an offspring of attachment, there can be no objection to the word 'Niḥspṛha' being interpreted as free from attachment; but the real meaning of the word 'Spṛhā' is a subtle form of desire, and not attachment. Therefore, instead of interpreting the word 'Niḥspṛha' as free from attachment, it is better and more appropriate to construe it as free from thirst or yearning.

The verse speaks of the perfect soul who has attained full peace of mind. That is why even after showing him as desireless and free from yearning, two more qualifications have been added as essential marks of his character, viz., absence of the sense of possession and freedom from egoism. For, generally speaking, even on attaining desirelessness and freedom from yearning if one continues to have a sense of possession and the feeling of egotism, he cannot be called a perfect soul. And he too is not perfect, who though desireless, free from yearning and devoid of the sense of possession, is not yet free from egoism. With the disappearance of egoism, all other weaknesses automatically disappear. So long as egoism, which is the cause of all, persists desire, yearning and the sense of possession can remain lurking in the mind in some form or other. And so long as there is the least trace of desire, yearning and the sense of possession lurking somewhere in the mind, full tranquillity cannot be had. The phrase 'Śāntiṁ Adhigacchati' also shows that full tranquillity is referred to here. Such a consummate and eternal peace can never be attained so long as the sense of possession and egoism persist. Hence it was but reasonable to add absence of the sense of possession and freedom from egoism as distinctive marks of the perfect soul besides desirelessness and freedom from yearning.

It is no doubt true that when the ego is eliminated, desire, yearning and sense of possession too disappear; for ego is the root of all. Removal of the cause will automatically lead to the elimination of the effects. Thus the mention of 'egolessness' was enough to characterize the perfect soul. Nevertheless, in order to bring home to Arjuna's mind a very clear idea of what a perfect soul is like, the mention of the

other three characteristics of desirelessness, freedom from yearning, and absence of the sense of possession is also quite justifiable.

Describing in this verse how a God-realized soul moves in the world, the Lord has replied to the fourth question of Arjuna relating to the perfect Yogī of stable mind. By declaring at the end of the verse, that such a Yogī attains peace the Lord has shown that he alone who moves among the sense-objects in this way is the perfect soul who has realized God, the embodiment of supreme peace.

Having thus answered all the four questions of Arjuna, the Lord now concludes the chapter by pointing out the magnitude of the state of a God-realized soul:—

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति।
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति॥ ७२॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; एषा such; ब्राह्मी स्थितिः (is) the state of the God-realized soul; एनाम् this (state); प्राप्य having reached; न विमुह्यति (he) does not give way to infatuation; अन्तकाले at the last moment, at the moment of death; अपि even; अस्याम् in this (state); स्थित्वा being established; ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् Brahmic Bliss; ऋच्छति attains.

Arjuna, such is the state of the God-realized soul; having reached this state, he overcomes delusion. And established in this state, even at the last moment, he attains Brahmic Bliss. (72)

The state of stable existence of God has been referred to in this verse as 'Brāhmī Sthiti'. The adjective 'Eṣā' points to that which has formed the subject of discussion in the foregoing verses. The word 'Sthiti' preceded by the adjectives 'Eṣā' and 'Brāhmī', therefore, refers to the state of the God-realized saint of stable mind, the description of which is found interspersed in all the verses from verse 55 to the end of the chapter. And to attain this state is to remain constantly and unshakably absorbed in God,—the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss,—absolutely free from egosim, the sense of possession, attachment, yearning and desire, and altogether undisturbed by favourable or unfavourable circumstances.

The Jīva merged in ignorance does not know what is Brahma (the Absolute), who is God, what is the nature of this world, what is Māyā, what is the relation obtaining between all these, who is he, wherefrom he has come, what is his duty, and what he is actually doing. This ignorance is known as 'Moha' or infatuation and the Jīva has been labouring under this delusion from time without beginning, and it is due to this that he is moving in this whirligig of worldly existence. Overcoming all egotism, sense of possession, attachment and desire when man at last succeeds in reaching the above state of God-realization, this delusion which has existed from time without beginning gets eradicated and will not appear again. This is what is meant by saying that "having reached this state the Yogī overcomes delusion."

He who succeeds in attaining this state during his life-time is the best flower of humanity. He who enjoys this Brahmic Bliss while living is liberated in this very life and is termed as a Jīvanmukta. But even he who succeeds at the last moment of his life either suddenly or as a reward of his Sādhanā in fixing his mind unshakably on Brahma or God alone, free from egoism, the sense

of possession, attachment, yearning and desire, is able to enjoy the Bliss of Brahmic existence.

The state of equanimity reached even at the time of departure from this world brings about the Sādhaka's deliverance that very moment. But even if his mental equilibrium gets disturbed at the last moment, his spiritual practice will not be lost. He will attain what is known as the state of a Yogī fallen from Yoga; and the latencies of even-mindedness practised by him during this life will reawaken the spirit of equanimity in him (VI.40—44), and striving with greater vigour, he will at last succeed in realizing God.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे साङ्ख्ययोगो
नाम द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥ २ ॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the Second Chapter entitled "Sāṅkhyayoga" (the Yoga of Knowledge).

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter III

The present chapter establishes, from various points of view, that performance of prescribed duties is obligatory on all. It fully explains how every individual member of society should carry on the duties and functions laid down for his own order in society and stage in life, why he should perform them, what harm will accrue to him if such duties are not performed, what is gained by their performance, what action leads to bondage and what leads to liberation. All these points pertaining to Karmayoga have thus been discussed in this chapter more and in greater detail than in any other chapter of the Gītā. Other topics have been very rarely introduced in it, and where introduced have been lightly touched upon. That is why the chapter has been given the name of "Karmayoga" or the Yoga of Action.

Title of the Chapter

In verses 1 and 2 of this chapter Arjuna, who had not been able to follow what the Lord was driving at, implores the Lord, as if somewhat complainingly, to tell him definitely how he may obtain the highest good. In reply to this, the Lord lays down in verse 3 the two courses of discipline and shows, in verse 4, that renunciation of action is obligatory in neither. Pointing out in verse 5 that none can remain wholly inactive even for a moment, in verse 6 He pronounces them as hypocrites, who outwardly restraining the organs of sense and action mentally go on dwelling on objects of senses. Verse 7 praises the Yogī who controlling by the mind his organs of sense and action carries on his activities with the help of those organs without the least attachment. Verses 8 and 9 show that action is superior to inaction and that life cannot be maintained without action, and exhort Arjuna to perform his duty disinterestedly and without any attachment. Verses 10 to 12 point out that having been enjoined by the Creator, Brahmā, performance of actions is obligatory on all; and verse 13 declares that partaking of what is left over after sacrifice absolves one of all sins and calls those who do not perform sacrifice as sinners. Verses 14 and 15 describe the cycle of creation and show that the all-pervading God is ever present in a sacrificial act. Verse 16 denounces those who do not follow the wheel of creation referred to above. Verses 17 and 18 show that the illumined saint who has realized the Self has no obligation, and has no use whatsoever for things done or not done; and establishing on these grounds, in verse 19 that action is necessary and declaring at the same time that disinterested action leads to God-realization, Arjuna is instructed to do his duty without attachment. Citing Janaka and others as examples of those who had attained perfection through action and showing that action is necessary even for the maintenance of the world order, verse 20 proves the utility of maintaining such order. Pointing out in verse 21 that the generality of men follow whatever a great man does and teaches, in verses 22 to 24 the Lord cites His own example to show the advantage of performing action and the harm accruing from non-performance of the same.

Summary of the Chapter

Verses 25 and 26 lay down that even the wise man should act for the maintenance of the world order. Verses 27 and 28 differentiate the perfect man of knowledge from the generality of men attached to action and verse 29 lays down that the wise should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant. Verse 30 instructs Arjuna to fight in a spirit of dedication to God, renouncing hope and nervous excitement as well as the sense of possession. Verse 31 says that the devout soul who follows this teaching of the Lord is released from the bondage of action; and verse 32 declares that he who finds fault with this doctrine, and does not follow it, is deluded and lost. Verse 33 shows that no one can help acting according to his nature. Verse 34 urges man not to be swayed by likes and dislikes, while verse 35 shows that one's own duty is preferable to another's duty, which is fraught with fear. On Arjuna asking in verse 36 as to who drives man to sinful action, the Lord replies in verse 37 that the root of all sin is desire, which is the greatest enemy of man. In verses 38 to 41 the Lord declares that desire is insatiable like fire and veils Knowledge and pointing out where it resides, advises Arjuna to kill it after controlling the senses. In verse 42, the Self has been declared as far superior to the senses, the mind and the intellect, and verse 43 concludes the chapter urging on Arjuna to subdue the mind by the intellect, and kill the enemy in the form of desire.

Link of the Discourse

From verse 11 to verse 30 in Chapter II the Lord dealt with the nature of the Self, and discussed Sāṅkhyayoga, or the Yoga of Knowledge. Thereafter, from verse 39 to verse 53 He expounded Karmayoga or the Path of Action in the form of equanimity. Then, in answer to Arjuna's interrogation, the Lord described from verse 54 right up to the end of the chapter the marks, conduct and glory of the God-realized soul, possessed of a stable mind, who had attained that state through the practice of Karmayoga. Glorifying Karmayoga in the course of that exposition, the Lord clearly defined its character in verses 47 and 48 urging on Arjuna to act. In verse 49 He declared action with a selfish motive as far inferior to Karmayoga in the form of equanimity, in verse 50 praising the mean of action endowed with equanimity, He urged on Arjuna to engage in the practice of Karmayoga; and verse 51 declares that the wise man endowed with equanimity attains the blissful supreme state. When Arjuna heard this exposition, he could not make out the real meaning of the instruction. Interpreting the word 'Buddhi' (used in the sense of equanimity in verses 49 to 51) as 'Knowledge' his mind got confused and it appeared to him as if the Lord was glorifying Knowledge in comparison to Action. Nay, the words of the Lord, though explicit appeared to him ambiguous and involved. Therefore, with a view to having his doubts cleared and in order to know wherein definitely lay his highest good, Arjuna asks the following question:—

अर्जुन उवाच

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन।
तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव॥ १॥

जनार्दन O Śrī Kṛṣṇa; चेत् if; ते by you; बुद्धिः Knowledge; कर्मणः to Action; ज्यायसी superior; मता (is) considered; तत् then; केशव O Kṛṣṇa; माम् me; घोरे कर्मणि to (this) terrible deed; किम् why; नियोजयसि do you urge.

Arjuna said: Kṛṣṇa if You consider Knowledge as superior to Action, why then do You urge me to this dreadful action, Keśava ! (1)

The Lord nowhere asserted in the preceding chapter that Knowledge was superior to Action; but failing to grasp the real meaning and import of the Lord's statement 'Buddhiyoga' for the Knowledge and was thus led to conclude that the Lord was declaring Action as far inferior to Knowledge. In reality, however, the word 'Buddhiyoga' in that verse was not used in the sense of Knowledge; it was expressive of Karmayoga characterized by equanimity, while the word 'Karma' occurring therein referred to action with an interested motive. For in that verse the Lord speaks of those who crave for the fruit of action as extremely poor and wretched and declaring action with a selfish motive as inferior, exhorts Arjuna to take recourse to Karmayoga, consisting in equanimity. But Arjuna failed to grasp the spirit of the Lord's instruction, and hence the question as set forth in the present verse arose in his mind.

The word 'Buddhi', used in this verse, cannot be taken in the sense of Karmayoga as consisting in equanimity. For, here, the word forms part of Arjuna's question. Failing to grasp the trend of the Lord's argument, he has been construing 'Buddhi' to mean knowledge, and it is therefore that he has put the present question. Had he understood 'Buddhi' in the sense of Karmayoga, there would have been no ground for him to ask the present question. Arjuna was taking 'Buddhi' to mean 'Jñāna' or Knowledge; therefore, following the line of Arjuna's thought the word 'Buddhi' in this verse has been interpreted as Knowledge.

Having failed to understand the true import of the Lord's teaching, Arjuna thought that through such injunctions as "Therefore, Arjuna, fight", "Your right is to work only", "perform your duties established in Yoga", etc., he was being urged to that very action which had been denounced by the Lord as inferior and insignificant. Therefore, as if in a complaining mood, Arjuna asked the Lord, in the above words, why he was being driven to the commission of a dreadful sin in the form of participation in the war.

The Lord is addressed in this verse as 'Janārdana' and 'Keśava'. Both these words are significant as will be clear from the following interpretation., 'Janārdana' is a compound word consisting of two parts 'Jana' and 'Ardana'. 'Ardana' means 'an object of prayer (अर्थते याच्यते) and 'Jana' means men in general. Thus, taken together, the word 'Janārdana' signifies 'He who is approched by all for the fulfilment of their prayer.' and the word 'Keśava' is formed of four component parts, viz., 'Ka', an equivalent of Brahmā, the Creator, 'A', a name of Viṣṇu, the Preserver, 'Īṣa', an epithet of Śiva, the Destroyer, and 'Va', which is an abbreviation of 'Vapu' or body. Thus taken together Keśava means 'He who is identical with the three Deities mentioned above or embodies in Himself all the three Deities taken together. Addressing the Lord by these names, Arjuna seeks to convey that he has already taken refuge in the Lord and approached Him with a submission for guidance and instruction as regards his course of duty (II.7), and that he is again approaching the Lord, who is God Himself, with that prayer. He solicits the Lord to favour him with advice and guidance, showing what is decidedly the best course for him.

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम्॥ २॥

व्यामिश्रेण इव वाक्येन by (these) seemingly involved expressions; **मे** my; **बुद्धिम्** mind; **मोहयसि**

You are puzzling; इव as it were; तत् therefore; एकम् निश्चित्य arriving at a definite conclusion; वद tell (me); येन by which; अहम् I; श्रेयः the highest good; आप्नुयाम् may obtain.

You are, as it were, puzzling my mind by these seemingly involved expressions; therefore, tell me definitely the one discipline by which I may obtain the highest good. (2)

Expressions which do not explicitly recommend any particular course of discipline after arriving at a definite conclusion, and which embody various suggestions, jumbled together, and thus mystify the hearer and lead him nowhere are what is referred to by the words 'Vyāmiśreṇa Vākyena' in the present verse. Arjuna having failed to grasp the meaning of the Lord, His words appeared to him as involved and puzzling. For when he was told that action was inferior to Buddhiyoga and was accordingly asked to have recourse to Buddhi (II.49), he thought the Lord was glorifying Knowledge and condemning Action, and was urging on him to take to knowledge. Again, when the Lord said that "the Sādhaka who is endowed with Buddhi sheds in this life both good and evil", (II.50), Arjuna thought that, in the opinion of the Lord, he who gave up all action in the form of virtue and vice was endowed with Buddhi or Knowledge. As against these statements when the Lord said, "Your right is to work only" (II.47), and "perform your actions established in Yoga" (II.48), Arjuna thought the Lord was urging him to action. Besides, when in verse II.45, the Lord asked him to transcend the evolutes of the three Guṇas (Nistraiguṇya) and be self-controlled (Ātmavān), he understood the instruction as enjoining renunciation of action; and when the Lord said, "Therefore, Arjuna, fight" (II.18), "Therefore, get ready for the fight," (II.38), "Exert yourself for the practice of this Yoga" (II.50), he thought he was being urged to engage himself in action. The above statements thus appeared to him mutually contradictory. Therefore, using the word 'Iva' twice in this verse, Arjuna wants to bring out that even though in reality the Lord was laying before him clearly and distinctly two divergent courses of discipline, and that He was not using involved expressions in His statements, and being his dearest friend and well-wisher, He did not say anything so as to puzzle his mind, on the contrary, whatever the Lord said was intended to dispel the delusion in his mind yet due to his own ignorance, it appeared to him as if the Lord was mystifying him by using expressions which were involved and mutually contradictory.

No doubt the confusion arose in Arjuna's mind as soon as he heard verses 49 and 50 of the second chapter, and in fact he ought to have got his doubts cleared then and there instead of waiting till the end of the chapter, and should have asked the question immediately after the Lord winded up the discussion in verse 53. But hearing as he did from the lips of the lord in verse 53 that when his mind would succeed in getting over delusion, and would rest stable in God, he would attain union with God, or realize God, he was possessed with a keen desire to know the distinguishing marks and conduct of the God-realized soul. It was therefore that he shelved the previous question for the time being, and questioned the Lord first about the marks of the God-realized soul; and no sooner did the Lord conclude His reply to that question that he placed his original doubt before the Lord. Had he raised this doubt before, the topic of the marks and conduct of the God-realized Yogī would have been thrown into the back-

ground, and could not be discussed in the setting in which it has been discussed.

By asking the Lord to tell him definitely the one discipline by which he could obtain the highest good, Arjuna intends to bring out that since whatever instruction he had received up to that point appeared to him as full of contradictions, he had not been able to determine his duty. He could not make out whether the Lord desired him to fight, or to renounce all actions; if he was to engage in fight, how he was to carry it on; and if the Lord wanted him to renounce actions, what he should do after such renunciation. Therefore, he humbly submitted to the Lord that He should chalk out his duty and lay down for him after careful consideration a definite course of discipline by following which he might reach the highest goal of existence.

The word 'Śreyaḥ' used in this verse does not mean objects of enjoyment in this world or the next; for Arjuna had declared long before, in II.8 that undisputed sovereignty over the earth and lordship over the gods could not drive away his grief. Therefore, 'Śreyaḥ', to him meant complete eradication of grief and infatuation and attainment of that imperishable Reality where in lies everlasting peace and eternal bliss. Therefore, it has been rendered into English as 'highest good'.

With the intention of pointing out, as desired by Arjuna, that one definite course of discipline for him was Karmayoga with devotion as the dominant factor, the Lord first answers his question by showing in the next verse that He did not use any "involved expression", but that His instructions were clear and distinct.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ।
ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम्॥ ३॥

अनघ O sinless one, Arjuna; अस्मिन् लोके in this world; द्विविधा निष्ठा a twofold course (of spiritual discipline); मया by Me; पुरा of yore; प्रोक्ता has been enunciated; साङ्ख्यानाम् in case of the followers of Sāṅkhyayoga; ज्ञानयोगेन (the Sādhanā proceeds) along the path of Knowledge; योगिनाम् (and) in the case of the Karmayogīs; कर्मयोगेन (it proceeds) along the path of Action.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, in this world two courses of Sādhanā (Spiritual discipline) have been enunciated by Me in the past. In the case of the Sāṅkhyayogī, the Sādhanā proceeds along the path of Knowledge; whereas in the case of the Karmayogī, it proceeds along the path of Action. (3)

The words 'Asmin Loke' refer to the human world; for man alone is qualified to adopt the discipline of either Jñānayoga or Karmayoga. The word 'Niṣṭhā' means a state. Adding the adjective 'Dvividhā' to it the Lord shows that there are two principal states or modes of Sādhanā or spiritual discipline. In one state man starts with a belief in the identity of the soul and the Oversoul, and regards himself as one with Brahma (Absolute); whereas in the other he recognizes God as the Almighty Lord, Creator, Ruler and Destroyer of the universe, and himself as an humble and obedient servant of the Lord.

In the former state man feels that it is the Guṇas, born of Prakṛti, that move among the Guṇas (III.28), and he has no connection with them; and under this belief he disclaims the idea of doership in respect of all the

activities of his body, mind and senses. He wholly renounces the feeling of egoism, the sense of possession, attachment and desire with reference to any action or its fruit, and identifying himself with Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, remains constantly established in It, nay, becomes one with It (V.24; VI.27). This is the path of Knowledge. Attaining this state, the Yogī transcends joy, grief and desire, and begins to view all alike (XVIII.54); he sees the entire world present in the Self as a dream, and sees the Self as pervading the whole universe (VI.29). The culmination of this Sādhanā is reached in God-realization.

The discipline of Karmayoga consists in honestly performing, as a matter of duty, such actions as are prescibed by the scriptures with due regard to one's order in society, stage in life, nature and circumstances, as obligatory on him, renouncing the sense of possession, attachment and desire in respect of all such actions and their fruit, and maintaining an attitude of indifference towards their fruition or otherwise as also towards their final outcome (II.47-48), and finally in climbing to the highest Yoga by overcoming attachment for sense-enjoyments, as well as for the activities of the senses, and renouncing all thoughts of the world (VI.4). And the discipline of Karmayoga with Bhakti (Devotion) as its dominant factor consists in offering to God all one's actions and their fruit (IX.27-28), regarding Him as all-powerful, the final substratum, all-pervasive, the universal friend, and the inspirer of all, and one's own self as in every way dependent on Him; performing all actions according to His behests and inspiration in a spirit of adoration to Him and as His tool, without entertaining the least attachment, sense of possession or desire in respect of those actions or their fruit, and remaining ever contented with whatever is ordained by Him; and finally in remaining constantly engaged in the thoughts of His Name virtues, glories and essence (X.9; XII.6; XVIII.57). The Yogī who reaches this state of perfection in Karmayoga overcomes all evils in the form of likes and dislikes, lust and anger etc., and begins to view all alike; for he sees his Lord dwelling in the hearts of all beings (XV.15; XVIII.61) and sees everything as God (VII.7—12; IX.16—19). The consummation of this state is reached in God-realization.

By saying that He enunciated these two courses of discipline in the past as well, the Lord seeks to point out to Arjuna that they were not being put before him as new revelations of truth; at the beginning of creation, as well as in course of His various manifestations that took place later, He had taught these two disciplines separately. Even so while revealing the non-dual character of the soul in verses 11 to 30 of chapter II he had exhorted Arjuna to fight according to the principle of Sāṅkhyayoga (II.18); and introducing the subject of Karmayoga in verse 39 and discussing the discipline of Karmayoga with its fruit in verses 40 to 53, He had instructed him to carry on the fight and perform other duties establishing himself in the Yoga of Equanimity (II.47—50). And in order to demarcate the two courses of discipline, He had clearly stated in verse 39, that the verses preceding it, had dealt with Sāṅkhyayoga, and the verses following it, would be devoted to a discussion of Karmayoga. Therefore, Arjuna's complaint that the Lord had used 'involved expressions in His instruction to him had no leg to stand upon.

Addressing Arjuna as 'Anagha' (O sinless one) on this particular occasion, the Lord meant to say that one who was addicted to sin, or was tainted with sin, could not attain perfection in any one of these two disciplines: but sinless as he was, Arjuna

could easily attain perfection in them, and it was therefore that the Lord had taught them to him.

By saying that the "Sādhanā of the Sāṅkhyayogī proceeds along the path of Knowledge while that of the Karmayogī along the path of Action." The Lord seeks to bring out that culmination of Sāṅkhyayoga is reached when by constantly following that discipline one ceases to identify oneself with the body; whereas perfection in Karmayoga is reached when through the continued practice of that discipline one overcomes the sense of possession, attachment and desire in respect of one's actions and their fruit, and acquires an attitude of indifference towards success and failure. There are two distinct types of Sādhakas qualified to follow the aforesaid two paths and their aptitude for any one of them is determined by their tendencies of previous births faith and predilection. And the two disciplines are quite distinct and independent of each other.

The two disciplines being fundamentally different, it is not possible for anyone to follow both of them simultaneously. For in Sāṅkhyayoga the soul is identified with the Oversoul, who is meditated on in His absolute and formless aspect, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss; whereas in Karmayoga while performing Action without attachment to its fruit one has to meditate on the Name, virtues, glory and reality of God as an object of worship and regarding Him as all-pervading, all-powerful and the Lord of all beings. In this way the two disciplines canot be followed by the same man at one and the same time.

The preceding verse showed that perfection in the discipline of Knowledge is attained through the practice of Jñānayoga, where as perfection in the discipline of Action is attained through the practice of Karmayoga. In order to establish this very point it is shown in the next verse that renunciation of action does not lead to perfection in either of the two disciplines.

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते।
न च सन्न्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति॥४॥

पुरुषः man; न neither; कर्मणाम् अनारम्भात् without undertaking actions; नैष्कर्म्यम् actionlessness; अश्नुते attains; न च nor; सन्न्यसनात् through renunciation (of actions); एव merely; सिद्धिम् perfection; समधिगच्छति reaches.

Man does not attain freedom from action (culmination of the discipline of Action) without entering upon action; nor does he reach perfection (culmination of the discipline of Knowledge) merely by ceasing to act. (4)

The word 'Naiṣkarmyam', in this verse, refers to the state of perfection in Karmayoga. He who has attained this state is released from the bondage of action once for all, even though engaged in all sorts of activities; in other words, his actions do not lead to bondage (IV.22, 41). That is why this state is referred to as 'Naiṣkarmyam' or freedom from action. This state is reached only by performing one's duties in a disinterested way, and cannot be attained without performing action. Therefore, release from the bondage of action can be obtained only by performing one's duties in a disinterested way, and not by shirking them. That is what is meant by the statement: "Man does not attain freedom from action without entering upon action."

The Lord had instructed Arjuna to give

up attachment for action and the desire for its fruit, and declared that such renunciation would lead to freedom from the bondage of action (II.51). This might lead Arjuna to think that if he totally gave up all actions, he would be automatically released from their bondage, and hence there was no need to participate in action. In order to avoid such a misconception, the Lord uttered the note of warning in the very first verse containing the instruction on Karmayoga: "Let not your attachment be to inaction". He further declares in chapter VI that "to the comtemplative soul who desires to climb to the heights of Karmayoga, action without motive is the only way to attain to those heights". (VI.3) Therefore, in order to show that man's disinclination to act from fear of physical exertion, or due to any other similar weakness, is an obstacle in the path of Karmayoga, the Lord says that "Man does not attain freedom from action without entering upon Action".

The word 'Siddhim' in this verse refers to perfection in Jñānayoga, which leads to the attainment of knowledge. Attaining this state, the Sādhaka identifies himself with Brahma; he no longer perceives any difference between the soul and the Oversoul, and becomes one with Brahma. That is why this state has been designated as 'Siddhi', or perfection. This perfection in Jñānayoga is attained by performing the duties appropriate to one's social order and stage in life, without claiming their doership, renouncing the sense of possession, attachment and desire in respect of all enjoyments, and through constant practice of meditation on God as identical with the self, and not merely, by renunciation of action. For without the extinction of egosim, the sense of possession and attachment one cannot be firmly established in identity with God. In fact, this state is reached when in all activities of the body, mind and senses, the Sādhaka does not feel himself the doer; but remains only as an onlooker or witness of those activities (XIV.19). Therefore, the Sādhaka following the path of Knowledge too, instead of attempting to give up the performance of duties appropriate to his social order and stage in life, should renounce the sense of doership and the sense of possession attachment and desire. It is to bring out this idea that the Lord says: "Man does not reach perfection merely by ceasing to act".

The two words 'Anārambhāt' and 'Saṁnyasanāt', though appearing as synonymous, have been used by the Lord in two different senses. By the use of 'Anārambhāt' He seeks to point out that non-performance of an obligatory duty is an obstacle in the attainment of perfection in Karmayoga. The word 'Saṁnyasanāt', however, shows that renunciation of action by itself does not constitute an obstacle in Jñānayoga. It simply says that perfection will not be reached by such renunciation alone; for the attainment of perfection the Sādhaka will be required to renounce the sense of doership in action and establish himself in identity with Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. Therefore, external renunciation of action is not of primary importance in the case of Jñānayogī; it is internal renunciation that counts. The Karmayogī however, must not refrain from action in any case. The use of the two words 'Anārambhāt' and 'Saṁnyasanāt' has been adopted to bring out this difference.

Thus showing that non-performance of duty is an obstacle in reaching perfection in the path of Karmayoga, and declaring that external renunciation of action is of minor importance in reaching perfection in Jñānayoga, the Lord now proceeds to place before Arjuna various reasons to demonstrate the necessity of performing action, with a view to

urging him to action, and in the first instance to pronounce total renunciation of action as physically impossible.

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः॥ ५॥

हि surely; कश्चित् न no one; जातु ever; क्षणम् for a moment; अपि even; अकर्मकृत् inactive; तिष्ठति remains; हि because; सर्वः everyone; प्रकृतिजैः गुणैः by nature-born qualities; अवशः helplessly; कर्म action; कार्यते is made to perform.

Surely none can ever remain inactive even for a moment; for everyone is helplessly driven to action by nature-born qualities. (5)

The word 'Karma' (action) forming part of the compound word 'Akarmakṛt' (refraining from action) includes all activities of the body, mind and senses such as movement, rest, satisfaction of hunger and thirst, going to sleep, waking, thought, reflection, dreaming, meditation and absorption in Samādhi. Therefore, so long as man carries his body, he is bound to perform action in one form or another according to his nature. This is what is meant by saying "None can remain wholly inactive even for a moment." What he can do is to renounce the sense of doership in action, give up the sense of possession, attachment and the desire for its fruit. To renounce these, is to renounce action altogether.

Strictly speaking, the man of knowledge, who has transcended the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti, falls beyond the purview of the word 'Kaścit' used in this verse. For, inasmuch as he ceases to have anything to do either with the Guṇas, or with their evolutes, it cannot be said of him that he acts under the impulse of the three Guṇas. Nevertheless, his body existing before the eyes of the world as a concatenation of the mind, intellect, senses and so on, goes on like an automaton doing something or other in name only, according to his own Prārabdha or the Prārabdha of the people around him; but inasmuch as he has no sense of doership, such action on his part is no action in the real sense of the term. There can be no objection, however, to the combination of his mind, intellect and senses etc., being included under the term 'Kaścit'. For being a product of the three Guṇas, it is not above the Guṇas; nay, it is on account of his rising above the influence of that body that the man of Knowledge is said to have transcended the three Guṇas.

The word 'Sarvaḥ' generally denotes all living beings; but in the present context its application should be restricted to human beings alone; for man alone is entitled to perform actions. And to act under the impulse of one's nature, which is formed out of the latencies of deeds performed in previous lives, is what is meant by "being helplessly driven to action by one's nature-born qualities."

In the Sāṅkhya system of Indian philosophy, the term 'Prakṛti' denotes the state of equilibrium obtaining among the three Guṇas; but the Lord holds them to be evolutes of Prakṛti. In order to make this point clear, the Lord has added the adjective 'Prakṛtijaiḥ', to the noun 'Guṇaiḥ in the present verse. Similarly, in several other verses of the Gītā, the Lord has spoken of the three Guṇas as evolutes of Prakṛti (XIII.19, 21; XIV.5; XVIII.40). The term 'Prakṛti' here denotes the eternal and prime Nature of God, which is the cause of the objective material world, which is nothing but a conglomeration of the three Guṇas and their modifications. It is also known by such terms as the unmanifest, the undifferentiated, Mahat-Brahma etc.

The preceding verse stated that none could remain without action even for a moment. To this one might raise the objection that one could refrain from action by forcibly suspending the functions of the senses. Therefore, in the next verse, the Lord shows that external suspension of the functions of the senses does not constitute renunciation of action.

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन्।
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते॥ ६॥

यः विमूढात्मा the fool who; **कर्मेन्द्रियाणि** the organs of sense and action; **संयम्य** (outwardly) restraining; **मनसा** mentally; **इन्द्रियार्थान्** the objects of (those) sense; **स्मरन्** dwelling on; **आस्ते** sits; **सः** he; **मिथ्याचारः** a hypocrite; **उच्यते** is called.

He who outwardly restraining the organs of sense and action, sits mentally dwelling on the objects of senses, that man of deluded intellect is called a hypocrite. (6)

The word 'Karmendriyāṇi' in this verse does not bear its generally accepted sense of the organs of action; it should be taken to mean all the ten organs of perception and action, with the help of which man carries on his external activities, i.e. perceives external objects— viz., the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell as well as the organ of speech, hands and feet, the organ of generation and the organ of defecation; for, the Gītā nowhere mentions separately the five organs of perception under the appellation of 'Jñānendriyas'. Besides, if the word is interpreted to mean only the organs of action such as speech etc., senses like the sense of hearing etc., are left unrestrained, so that the picture of the hypocrite remains incomplete. Moreover, it becomes obligatory to state here what use the hypocrite makes of his senses of perception; but the Lord remains silent on this question. In the next verse as well the Lord speaks of practising Karmayoga with the help of the Karmendriyas; but one cannot undertake this Yoga by means of the organs of action such as speech, etc., alone, and the help of the senses of perception will also be required for the practice of Karmayoga.

It is, therefore, quite justifiable to take the word 'Karmendriyāṇi' as covering all the ten organs which are employed for carrying on worldly activities, and forcibly suspending the functions of hearing etc., is what is meant by wilful external restraint of the organs of sense and action.

In this connection it should be borne in mind that he who endeavours to restrain the senses forcibly from running after sense-objects in order to bring them under control, so as to be able to concentrate his thoughts on God, and yet owing to the wandering of his mind cannot help dwelling on sense-objects, will not be classed as a hypocrite. He is a spiritual aspirant; for, like the hypocrite, it is not his object to meditate on objects of enjoyment. He desires from the bottom of his heart to control the mind as well; but due to past habits, attachment for worldly objects and the force of latencies of past Karma, his mind reverts to worldly objects in spite of himself. He cannot, therefore, be blamed for this obduracy of the mind; and it is but natural for the mind to act in this wayward way during the initial stages of one's Sādhanā or spiritual discipline.

The word 'Saṁyamya' in this verse cannot be taken to mean controlling the organs of senses and action. For he who has controlled his senses cannot be a hypocrite in the proper sense of the term. Sense-control is a part of the Yogic practices. 'Saṁyamya' has, therefore, been rightly interpreted as

meaning mere outward restraint of the organs of sense and action.

The word 'Indriyārthān' means the corresponding objects of the ten senses. Verse 9 of Chapter V uses the word 'Indriyārthān' in the same sense.

Just as the heron sits motionless at the brink of a sheet of water in order to deceive the fish, which constitute its food, even so the hypocrite puts on a cloak of self-control, though inwardly he has no desire to control his mind. Inasmuch as he thus practises dissimulation he is called a dissembler or hypocrite.

Declaring this outward restraint of the senses from sense-objects as mere hypocrisy, the Lord now praises the yogī who renouncing all attachment employs his senses in the disinterested performance of duties.

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते॥ ७॥

तु on the other hand; अर्जुन O Arjuna; यः who; मनसा by the mind; the power of the will; इन्द्रियाणि the organs (of sense and action); नियम्य controlling; असक्तः (remaining) unattached; कर्मेन्द्रियैः through (those) organs; कर्मयोगम् the Yoga of Action; आरभते undertakes; सः he; विशिष्यते excels.

On the other hand, he who controlling the organs of sense and action by the power of his will, and remaining unattached, undertakes the Yoga of Action through those organs, Arjuna, he excels. (7)

The word 'Tu' has been used in an antithetical sense to differentiate the yogī, who while performing action keeps the mind and senses under control, from him, who outwardly renounces action. Here, again, the words 'Indriyāṇi' and 'Karmendriyaiḥ' both denote all the ten organs; for if they are taken to mean the five organs of action alone, merely controlling them will not bring all the other senses under control, nor can Karmayoga be practised through these five organs alone. For without the proper exercise of the senses of perception like the sense of hearing etc., practice of Karmayoga will not be possible. Therefore, all the ten senses should be taken as covered by the two words mentioned above. In verse 41 of this chapter, the Lord again uses the world 'Indriyāṇi' with 'Niyamya' and exhorts Arjuna to control all his senses.

The word 'Niyamya' in this verse cannot be taken in the sense of stopping the function of the senses; for Karmayoga cannot be practised when the senses have altogether ceased to function. The practice of Karmayoga through the organs of perception and action consists in performing all actions such as sacrifice, charity, austerity, study of and imparting instruction in, the scriptures, governance of a kingdom, carrying on business transactions and menial service, and carrying on all the functions of the senses such as satisfaction of hunger and thirst, falling asleep and waking, movement and rest etc., enjoying the various sense-objects such as sound, etc., through senses which are properly disciplined and controlled, maintaining an attitude of indifference to success and failure, and renouncing attraction for and aversion to one's prescribed duties as well as with regard to all enjoyments of this world and the next, that may be obtained as their reward. verse 64 and 65 of chapter II speak of this very practice of Karmayoga resulting in the

attainment of placidity of mind, which in its turn brings about the cessation of all forms of misery.

By saying "he excels" the Lord praises the Karmayogī by declaring him to be superior to all ordinary men of the world. It does not mean that he is declared as superior only to the hypocrite referred to in the previous verse; for the hypocrite mentioned above is a dissembler possessed of demoniacal qualities. In comparison to him, even a worldly-minded man performing action which is sanctioned by the scriptures, with an interested motive, is much superior. Therefore, to declare the Karmayogī, possessed of divine qualities, as superior to hypocrite would be as ridiculous as calling a chaste woman higher than a whore, and would be belittling her under cover of praise. Therefore, the words, "he excels" should be interpreted to mean that he is superior to all ordinary men of the world, and should thus be regarded as an unstinted and undisguised tribute to the Karmayogī.

Replying to Arjuna's query as to why he was being urged to such a dreadful action as warfare, the Lord declared one who merely outwardly renounced action as a hypocrite, and praised the Karmayogī and now commands Arjuna to perform his allotted duty:—

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः॥ ८॥

त्वम् you; नियतम् कर्म (your) prescribed duty; कुरु perform; हि for; अकर्मणः to inaction; कर्म action; ज्यायः (is) superior; च besides; अकर्मणः through inaction; ते शरीर-यात्रा the maintenance of your body; अपि even; न प्रसिद्ध्येत् cannot be accomplished.

Therefore, do you perform your allotted duty; for action is superior to inaction. Desisting from action, you cannot even maintain your body. (8)

The word 'Karma' preceded by the adjective 'Niyatam' in this verse stands for 'Svadharma', or one's own duty, as laid down in the scriptures, with due regard to the order in society, stage in life, nature and circumstances of an individual; and by commanding Arjuna to perform it the Lord seeks to dispel the delusion in his mind which had led him to imagine that the Lord had used "involved expressions" in His teachings to him, and to seek his definite instructions as to what he should do. In the present verse the Lord lays down that definite discipline for Arjuna. For reasons mentioned above renunciation of action was in no way desirable for him; that is why he should strictly observe his 'Svadharma' as enjoined by the scriptures. As a Kṣatriya, it was Arjuna's duty to fight; though apparently full of violence and involving bloodshed, fighting was not a "dreadful action" so far as he was concerned. On the other hand, if carried on in a disinterested spirit, it was calculated to bring him the highest good. Therefore, he should give up all doubts, and prepare himself for the fight.

There was a lurking misconception in Arjuna's mind that, in the eyes of the Lord, withdrawal from action was superior to participation in action; the Lord is seeking to dispel this delusion when he definitely asserts that action is superior to inaction, He purports to say that performance of one's ordained duty leads to purification of the heart and expiation of sins, whereas neglect of duty exposes one to sin and makes him a victim of error, sloth and sleep, etc., which bring about his fall (XIV.18). That is why

performance of action is in every way superior to its non-performance. Performance of duty even with some interested motive, or with a view to expiating sins, is far better than its non-performance; there should be no wonder then, that its disinterested performance should be immensely superior to inaction.

Lastly, the Lord points out, that one would find it impossible to live if he totally renounced all activities. He must do some thing at least for the maintenance of his body, under such circumstances, if he renounced his prescribed duties, his downfall was inevitable. Therefore, from every point of view, performance of duty was better than non-performance of the same.

Here it may be asked: "When even virtuous deeds, such as the performance of sacrifice, charities and austerities etc; prescribed by the scriptures, have been regarded as the cause of bondage, how can action be superior to inaction ? In order to meet this objection, the Lord says:—

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर॥ ९॥

यज्ञार्थात् कर्मणः अन्यत्र except when action is performed for the sake of sacrifice; अयम् this; लोकः world, mankind; कर्मबन्धनः (is) bound by its own actions; कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; मुक्तसङ्गः free from attachment; तदर्थम् for the sake of sacrifice (alone); कर्म (your) duty; समाचर efficiently perform.

Man is bound by his own action except when it is performed for the sake of sacrifice. Therefore, Arjuna, do you efficiently perform your duty, free from attachment; for the sake of sacrifice alone. (9)

When a duty laid down in the scriptures is performed with a view to maintaining the institution of sacrifice in the form of performance of duty, and in a detached way, without any desire for fruit, it does not lead to bondage. On the other hand, through disinterested performance of duty, man attains purity of heart and realizes God. This is what is meant by the Lord's statement that "man is bound by his own action except when it is performed for the sake of the sacrifice." With the exception of such benevolent actions, all other actions falling under the category of either virtue or vice lead to bondage inasmuch as they are conducive to rebirth. Man has perforce to take birth in various wombs in order to reap the fruit of good and evil actions that he performs with an interested motive; these repeated births and repeated deaths constitute what is known as bondage. That is why the man who performs actions with an interested motive, or is engaged in sinful acts, is bound by such actions. Therefore, in order to attain liberation from the bondage of Karma, man should perform actions prescribed by the scriptures disinterestedly, and only in the spirit of performing a duty.

Man alone is qualified to perform either good or evil actions. Other beings do not possess this qualification, therefore they are not capable of doing anything new which may be characterized as either virtue or vice. Birth in other wombs is attained only to reap the fruit of actions done in a human life. That is why the actions of other beings do not cause their bondage. Only actions performed in a human life cause bondage. In order to bring out this idea the words 'Ayam Lokaḥ', meaning the world of human beings, have been used in this verse.

By exhorting Arjuna "to perform his

duty efficiently, without attachment, and for the sake of sacrifice alone," the Lord indicates that action done in a detached way for the sake of sacrifice cannot bring bondage to man; nay, even the stock of past merits and sins earned by such a man is wiped off (IV.23). That is why Arjuna is being asked to perform all actions efficiently and zealously in a disinterested way, wholly renouncing the sense of possession and attachment, and with a view to preserving the continuity of obligatory acts prescribed by the scriptures.

The adjective 'Muktasaṅgaḥ' used in the verse indicates that action should be performed without entertaining the feeling of 'mine' and attachment in respect of one's actions as well as their fruit. In other words, renunciation of the fruit of action should be accompanied by the renunciation of attachment and the feeling of 'mine' in respect of one's actions and their fruit.

The preceding verse stated that action done for the sake of sacrifice did not lead to bondage. Therefore, the question naturally arises: What is sacrifice ? Why should it be performed ? How is it that man performing action for the sake of sacrifice does not suffer bondage ? The Lord, therefore, proceeds to answer these questions in the following verses producing the testimony of the Creator, Brahmā:—

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ १० ॥

प्रजापतिः the Lord of creation, Brahmā; पुरा at the beginning of creation; सहयज्ञाः along with (the spirit of) sacrifice; प्रजाः mankind; सृष्ट्वा having created; उवाच said (to them); अनेन by this; प्रसविष्यध्वम् you shall prosper; एषः this; वः to you; इष्टकामधुक् the giver of desired enjoyments; अस्तु may prove to be.

Having created mankind with their duties specified at the beginning of Creation the Creator, Brahmā, said to them, "You shall prosper by this; may this yield the enjoyment you seek. (10)

The word 'Prajāḥ' accompanied by the adjective 'Sahayajñāḥ', refers to all human beings who are qualified to perform sacrifices, in other words, who are entitled to perform their duty— 'Svadharma'— in the shape of offerings to gods, charities, austerities, personal service etc., as enjoined by the scriptures with due regard to their order in society and stage in life, and who have been referred to in the preceding verse by the words 'Ayam Lokaḥ'. And the word 'Anena' refers to the various forms of action enjoined by the scriptures with due regard to the Varṇa, Āśrama, nature and circumstances of an individual such as the performance of sacrifices, charities, austerities, breathcontrol, control of the senses, acquiring and imparting knowledge, governance of a state, warfare, agriculture, trade and commerce, bodily service and other duties, which all come under the general name of sacrifice in the form of 'Svadharma'.

The commandment of the Creator, as quoted in the verse, viz., "You shall prosper by this; may this yield the enjoyment you seek," represents the benediction pronounced by the creator on the humanity at large. The Creator thereby assured man that it was for his sake that He had evolved the institution of sacrifice in the form of Svadharma or one's allotted duty and that if man followed his Svadharma with all its limbs he would

continue to prosper, and would suffer no fall and would ultimately rise to a superior level of existence; and further that sacrifice in the form of performance of one's prescribed duties would continue to fulfil one's earthly requirements as well.

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ॥ ११॥

अनेन through this; देवान् the gods; भावयत foster; ते those; देवाः gods; वः you; भावयन्तु may foster; परस्परम् each other; भावयन्तः fostering; परम् श्रेयः the highest good; अवाप्स्यथ you will attain.

"Foster the gods through this (sacrifice), and let the gods be gracious to you. Each fostering other disinterestedly, you will attain the highest good. (11)

The word 'Anena' in this verse refers to sacrifice in the form of performance of 'Svadharma' or one's own duty, which is the subject of discussion here. But the verse enjoins upon us the performance of sacrifice in the form of 'Svadharma' only indirectly by inculcating the necessity of offering oblations to gods with the chanting of Vedic Mantras as a typical instance of such 'Svadharma'. Hence the word 'Anena' should be understood to imply the offering of oblations to gods as a typical form of sacrifice; and offering nourishment to them in the shape of such oblations and meeting their other requirements is what is meant by fostering the gods. And construing the word 'sacrifice' in the wider sense of performance of Svadharma,— which is typified here by the offering of oblations to the sacred fire,—service of the Ṛṣis, manes, spirits and genii, men, beasts, birds and all other species of living beings and attempts to make them happy; and foster them, should be included in this sacrifice.

With reference to the gods, the Creator says "Let the gods foster You." That is to say, just as it is obligatory for man to nourish and foster the gods even so it is the duty of the gods to meet his needs and help his advancement. Thus the Creator enjoins the gods as well that they should, in their turn, foster mankind and do their duty by them.

Thus doing their duty by each other through disinterested service, men as well as the gods will not only attain material prosperity, but will succeed in obtaining even the highest good in the form of Mokṣa or salvation. This is what is meant by the Creator when he says, "Thus fostering one another disinterestedly you will attain the highest good?" The intention of the Creator seems to be that so far as the gods are concerned, they should try in a disinterested way to help and foster man even if man fails to offer them sacrifices, worship and other forms of service; whereas for man his commandment is that he should offer worship, sacrifices and service to the gods for the growth and nourishment of the gods alone, in a disinterested way. Similarly, he should offer his disinterested services to the Ṛṣis, manes, fellow-men, beasts, birds, worms and insects etc., and try to make them happy.

इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः॥ १२॥

यज्ञभाविताः fostered by sacrifice; देवाः gods; वः on you; इष्टान् भोगान् the desired enjoyments; हि surely; दास्यन्ते will (continue to) bestow; तैः by them; दत्तान् the gifts bestowed; एभ्यः to them; अप्रदाय without giving (in return); यः who; भुङ्क्ते enjoys; सः he; स्तेनः (is) a thief; एव undoubtedly.

"Fostered by sacrifice, the gods will surely bestow on you unasked all the desired enjoyments." He who enjoys the gifts bestowed by them, without giving them in return, is undoubtedly a thief. (12)

When the Creator said that fostered by sacrifice, the gods would surely bestow on man all the desired enjoyments unasked, he meant that, for his own part; man should go on scrupulously performing his duty. If man did not fail in the performance of his duty, there could be no doubt that fostered and nourished by his sacrifices, the gods would ever continue to supply him with all the means of leading a happy and contented life; for the gods were bound to perform their part of duty.

Reproducing up to this point the words of the Creator, the Lord shows in the second half of the present verse that in pursuance of the instructions of the Creator the gods have from the very beginning of creation been supplying man with all that he requires to carry on his existence, viz., foodgrains, water, fruits, flowers, metals and minerals, etc., and in order to make him happy and meet his other needs have been nourishing the beasts, birds, trees, medicinal herbs, creepers and grass etc. Man is indebted to the gods for all this service. He who without repaying this debt and offering to the gods their rightful due in the form of sacrificial oblations makes use of these bounties of his own personal ends is as ungrateful, and as great a thief, as a son who having received in his early days all the fostering care and affection of his loving parents does not render any service to them in their old age, nor offers them Śrāddha (food) and Tarpaṇa (water) after their death; or, as a man who having received help from a friend when in difficulty does not repay his obligation to the best of his ability; or as an adopted son, who having inherited a fortune from his adoptive parents does not render any service to them.

From the very beginning of creation man has been nourishing and fostering the gods through the performance of sacrifices, and the gods have been supplying him with desired enjoyments. This tradition of mutual service between the gods and man has come down from the beginning of time. Those who have maintained this tradition of mutual service, and fostered the gods through sacrificial acts in the past, or who are doing so even now are certainly no thieves; but he who enjoys worldly pleasures and amenities bestowed on him by the gods as the reward of sacrifices offered by others, and does not repay their obligations himself by offering oblations to them deserves to be called a thief. Just as a man appropriating for himself the milk of a cow reared and nurtured by another on the plea that since it is human beings who serve the cow, and he too is a human being and hence entitled to take its milk, will be considered a thief, even so he who enjoys desired enjoyments bestowed on him by the gods fostered and nourished by the sacrifices of another, without giving anything to the gods in return, should resonably be regarded as a thief.

Thus adducing the testimony of the Creator, Brahmā, the Lord established the necessity of performing sacrifices, etc., and censured those who do not offer sacrifices by calling them thieves. Now, in the following verse He praises those who perform these obligatory acts, and reproaches those sinful men who perform action only for the maintenance of their own bodies.

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ १३ ॥

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः partaking of the remains of sacrifice; सन्तः the virtuous; सर्वकिल्बिषैः of all sins; मुच्यन्ते are absolved; ये पापाः the sinful ones who; आत्मकारणात् for the sake of (nourishing) their body (alone); पचन्ति cook (food); ते they; तु only; अघम् sin; भुञ्जते eat.

The virtuous who partake of what is left over after sacrifice are absolved of all sins. Those sinful ones who cook for the sake of nourishing their body alone eat only sin. (13)

The word 'Yajña', in this verse, though primarily used in the sense of the Five Great Sacrifices, covers all good works enjoined by the scriptures and involving human activity. The efficient working of the world order, and the proper maintenance and growth of all beings in creation, depends on the interaction of the five orders of beings, viz., gods, Ṛṣis, manes, human beings and other creatures. All receive their subsistence and nourishment through the co-operation of these five orders of beings. The gods supply the desired enjoyments to all beings; the Ṛṣis and Maharṣis enlighten them with knowledge; the manes bestow their fostering care and affection on their children and are generally interested in their well-being; man serves all beings by his actions, and the beasts, birds, plants etc., have their very being surrendered to the service of others. Among these five, man bears on his shoulders the responsibility of nourishing and fostering all beings because of his capacity, qualifications and resources. That is why man serves all beings through the performance of actions enjoined by the scriptures. The Five Great Sacrifices represent here all good actions enjoined by the scripures and done for the service of the people. It is obligatory for man to recognize that all these beings have their share in whatever he earns by his own effort; for he earns his livelihood and enjoys the fruit of his labours with the help and co-operation of all these beings. It is therefore that he alone who partakes of what is left over after sacrifice, that is, takes his own humble share after offering these beings their respective dues, and does not take the lion's share himself, has been designated by the scriptures as the partaker of nectar. He who does not follow this course, and depriving others of their dues devotes whatever he earns entirely to his own personal ends, eats only sin. Food obtained through different avenues of work is consumed only after being cooked, and since sacrifice to the gods and the rite known as Vaiśvadeva (in which morsels of food are offered to the various deities through fire before meals) cannot be performed without offering such food to the fire, emphasis has been laid here on the performance of Havana (offering of oblations to the sacred fire) and the ritual of 'Balivaiśvadeva'. But the Five Great Sacrifices are not accomplished merely by offering oblations to the sacred fire and performing the rite of Balivaiśvadeva. The real partaker of the remains of sacrifice is he who takes for his own use only as much of his earnings as is left after offering to others their due share. The word 'Yajñasiṣṭāśinaḥ' in this verse refers to such a selfless Karmayogī.

The word 'Santaḥ' in this verse refers to the practicant, and not to the realized soul; for the question of absolution from sin cannot arise in the case of the perfect soul, and the verse speaks of absolution from sin. The word 'Santaḥ no doubt, applies to the God-realized soul; but in the present context the word only means a practicant who acts disinterestedly. God-realized souls too perform sacrificial acts, but they do so not for obtaining absolution from sin, but under the natural impulse of maintaining the world-order.

Man bears on his head a load of sins committed by him in past lives, and in the

course of his current life too he is led to commit sins that are incidental to the vocation he follows for his livelihood, however honest and lawful it may be. According to the maxim; "All undertakings are involved in sin" (XVIII.48) offering oblations to the sacred fire, governance of the people, warfare, agriculture, trade, industry, and all other means of livelihood involve in their pursuit the practice of violence in one form or other. The oven, millstone, broom, mortar and vessels for storing water in a household cause loss of life to innumerable ants, insects and animalcules every day. Besides, many sins are committed by man in numerous other ways due to inadvertence etc. The good soul who performs the Five Great Sacrifices in a disinterested spirit, keeping only the service of the people in view, and with the sole object of making others happy, and considering life's fulfilment to lie only in such service, nay, who utilizes his money earned by honest and legitimate means in rendering appropriate service to others to the best of his ability and as a form of sacrifice, and accepts for himself only what is left over after that sacrifice as Prasāda or remnant of food offered to a deity to keep up life only for the sake of service get liberated from the shackles of all past and present sins and attains the state of Eternal Brahma (IV.31). That is why a Sādhaka following this course has been called a saint. The words "he gets absolved of all sins", occurring in the above verse, should be construed in the above sense.

Absolution from the five incidental sins which are unavoidably incurred every day in every household is attained even by a worldly minded man who acts in accordance with the scriptural ordinance with the object of gaining worldly pleasures, and offers every being its legitimate due by performing religious rites such as the daily offering of oblations to the sacred fire and Balivaiśvadeva etc., as an expiation for those sins. The application in the present verse of the word 'Santaḥ' for the sacrificer, and the use of the adjective 'Sarvaiḥ' (all) with 'Kilbiṣaiḥ' (sins), however, indicates, that the saintly soul who performs the Five Sacrifices and other such acts in a disinterested spirit as explained above obtains absolution from all his sins, past and present.

The cooking of food and eating the same, referred to in the second half of the verse, represents all forms of enjoyment that can be enjoyed through the senses. He who obtains the objects of such enjoyment and enjoys them after sharing them with others, and that too in a disinterested spirit in order to be able to serve the public, gets absolved of sin in the above manner. And he who with an interested motive allows to other beings their legitimate share, and thereafter takes for himself his own share of enjoyment, is no sinner either. But he who accumulates objects of enjoyment only for his personal gratification,—for the nourishment of his own body and senses,—and enjoys them for his own sake depriving others of their share accumulates only sin by sinful means and enjoys nothing but sin. For neither are his actions inspired by the spirit of sacrifice, nor does he allow others their proper and legitimate share. Thus his earnings and enjoyments both being sinful, he has been pronounced a sinner, and his enjoyment has been declared a sin (vide Manusmṛti. III.118).*

Here it may be asked: What harm if one does not perform such a sacrifice ? Anticipating this question the Lord propounds the necessity of performing sacrifices for maintaining the world-order:—

* अघं स केवलं भुङ्क्ते यः पचत्यात्मकारणात्।
"He who cooks food merely for his own sake eats only sin".

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः।
यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः॥ १४॥
कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम्।
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम्॥ १५॥

भूतानि (all) beings; अन्नात् from food; भवन्ति are evolved; अन्नसम्भवः production of food; पर्जन्यात् (is) from rain; पर्जन्यः rain; यज्ञात् from sacrifice; भवति ensues; यज्ञः (and) sacrifice; कर्मसमुद्भवः is rooted in prescribed action; कर्म action; ब्रह्मोद्भवम् as having its origin in the Vedas; विद्धि know; ब्रह्म (and) the Vedas; अक्षरसमुद्भवम् as proceeding from the Indestructible (God); तस्मात् hence (it is proved that); सर्वगतम् ब्रह्म the all-pervading Infinite; नित्यम् always; यज्ञे in sacrifice; प्रतिष्ठितम् (is) present.

All beings are evolved from food; production of food is dependent on rain; rain ensues from sacrifice, and sacrifice is rooted in prescribed action. Know that prescribed action has its origin in the Vedas, and the Vedas proceed from the Indestructible (God); hence the all-pervading Infinite is always present in sacrifice. (14,15)

The word 'Anna' or 'food' should be taken in a comprehensive sense, and not merely as representing foodgrains like wheat, gram, etc. All types of gross and subtle articles of food, which go to nourish the bodies of different types of beings are covered by the word 'Anna' as used in this verse. Therefore, the statement that "all beings are evolved from food" means that food when consumed and assimilated is gradually transformed into sperm and ovum etc., from whose combination all types of beings take their birth, and it is food again which goes to nourish their bodies even after birth. Therefore, food is the cause of the birth, growth and nourishment of beings. The Śruti says: "It is from food that these beings take their birth, and it is food again on which they live after being born." (Taitt. Up. •III.2)* Again, the production of food existing in any form or shape gross or subtle, in this world mainly depends upon water; for water, in the gross or subtle state, is present everywhere, and the source of water is rain. This is what is meant by the statement that "Production of food is dependent on rain."

Of all types of beings in God's creation it is man alone on whom devolves the responsibility for the maintenance, nourishment and protection of every other type of beings. Realizing this responsibility whatever man does with his mind, speech and body for the maintenance and welfare of all other beings, the cumulative effect of all such activities is known as 'sacrifice' offering of oblations to the sacred fire, charities and austerities, earning one's livelihood and all other duties are thus covered by the term 'sacrifice'. Of course, Offering of oblations to the sacred fire being the foremost among them, the scriptures declare that rain ensues as the result of oblations offered to the fire and rain in its turn brings into existence all created beings through the production of food. But the term 'sacrifice' here does not imply offering of oblations alone. Every good action perfromed in an altruistic spirit should be taken as covered by the term 'sacrifice'.

The statement that "rain ensues from sacrifice", is to be understood in the sense

* अन्नाद्ध्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते, अन्नेन जातानि जीवन्ति।

that rain is caused by the sacrifice offered by man in the form of the performance of his duties. Here it may be contended that there are so many lands where sacrifices are not performed, and yet there is no dearth of rainfall there. Our reply to this contention is that if the record of human activities in that land is gone into, it will be found that altruistic actions in one form or other are being performed there. Over and above this, sacrifices have been performed from the beginning of creation, as the result of which the lands in question are being supplied with rainfall; and so long as the effect of those sacrifices continues and does not exhaust itself, the lands will continue to receive their share of rainfall. But if man ceases to perform sacrifices, the aforesaid accumulation of the effect of previous sacrifices will in course of time get exhausted, and thereafter rainfall will cease, making it difficult for the inhabitants of this globe to maintain their lives or find their nourishment. Therefore, it is incumbent on man to perform his duty in the form of a sacrifice.

When verse 14 says that sacrifice is rooted in prescribed action it means to show that the scriptures have prescribed various forms of sacrifice to suit different types of men with due regard to their order in society, stage in life, nature and circumstances, and all of them are performed through the activity of the mind, senses and body. No sacrifice can be accomplished without action as enjoined by the scriptures. The point has been made clear in verse 32 of Chapter IV of the Gītā.

The word 'Brahma' has been used in various senses in the Gītā in different contexts. It means 'God' in verses 3 and 24 of Chap. VIII; 'Prakṛti' in verses 3 and 4 of Chap. XIV; 'Brahmā' (the Creator) in verse 17 of Chap. VIII, and again in verse 37 of Chap. XI; 'Vedas' in verse 32 of Chap. IV, and again in verse 24 of Chap. XVII; and the Brāhmaṇa class in verse 42 of Chap. XVIII. Here the subject of discussion is origin of prescribed action and man obtains his knowledge of prescribed duties from the Vedas, or from scriptures which follow the Vedas. Therefore, the word 'Brahma' appearing in the first line of verse 15 should be interpreted to mean the Vedas. In addition to the above reason, the line itself states that 'Brahma' proceeds from 'Akṣara' or the Indestructible God. This supports the interpretation we have put upon the word; for it can neither mean God, who is Himself 'Akṣara', nor Prakṛti, who is beginningless. It would, therefore, be meaningless to speak of God or Prakṛti as having proceeded from 'Akṣara', or Indestructible God. Nor can the word refer to 'Brahmā' or the Brāhmaṇa class in this context; for they are not the subjects of discussion. When the verse states that prescribed action has its origin in the Vedas, it means to show that sacrifice is accomplished through actions duly performed according to rules after ascertaining from the Vedas and other scriptures what is the duty of a particular individual and how it is to be performed. Such actions are known either from the Vedas or from the scriptures which follow the Vedas. Therefore, for the due performance of sacrifice every man should obtain a knowledge of his duty.

God is eternal; therefore the Vedas which embody His commandments, are also eternal. No doubt can be entertained about this essential fact. Therefore, when the verse says that the Vedas proceed from God, it does not mean that the Vedas were non-existent before and came into existence afterwards; but it means that the Vedas are brought into manifestation by God at the beginning of creation and get absorbed into Him at the time of final dissolution of creation. In order to show that the Vedas do not owe their existence to any person,— they

are not man-made, the verse states that the Vedas proceed from God, who is indestructible. The statement thus establishes that the Vedas have no beginning. It is, in this sense, again that verse 23 of Chap. XVII speaks of the Vedas as having originated from God.

The word 'Brahma' in the second half of verse 15 stands for the all-pervading, almighty God, who is the support and substratum of all; and the word 'Tasmāt' (therefore), followed by the statement that "the all-pervading God is always present in sacrifice" shows that since the Vedas, which contain the rules of every form of sacrifice, are the word of God, the soul of sacrifice, the all-pervading God Himself, ever remains present in sacrifice performed according to the rules prescribed in them. In other words, Sacrifice itself is a direct manifestation of God. Therefore, every individual seeking God-realization should make it point to perform his duty according to the commands of God.

Showing the wheel of creation to thus dependent on sacrifice, and declaring God to be present in sacrifice, the Lord now proceeds to establish the necessity of performing one's duty as a form of sacrifice by censuring those who do not follow the wheel of creation, i.e., neglect the performance of their prescribed duties.

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः।
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति॥ १६॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā Arjuna; यः who; इह here, in this world; एवम् thus; प्रवर्तितम् set going; चक्रम् the wheel (of creation); न not; अनुवर्तयति follows; अघायुः sinful; इन्द्रियारामः sensual; सः he; मोघम् in vain; जीवति lives.

Arjuna, he who does not follow the wheel of creation thus set going in this world (i.e., does not perform his duties), sinful and sensual, he lives in vain. (16)

The word 'Cakram', or wheel, in this verse refers to the cyclic process of creation as described in verse 14 above. For sacrifice proceeds from actions of man enjoined by the scriptures; sacrifice in its turn brings about rainfall and rainfall helps in the production of food; food promotes the growth of beings; and man again, who is one of these beings, performs works which are turned into sacrifice, and so on. This process of creation has thus been going on for ever in a circle. It is to bring out this idea that the word 'Cakram' together with its adjunct 'Evam Pravartitam' (thus set going) has been used. Carefully performing one's duty according to one's own sphere of duty or 'Svadharma', as determined by one's order in society, stage in life, nature and circumstances, and for which a special responsibility attaches to one, is what is meant by following this "wheel of creation." Therefore, the Yogī who performs his duty renouncing attachment and desire, and only with a view to maintaining the efficient working of this wheel of creation, and has no selfish end to serve thereby; realizes God Himself, who is present in that sacrifice in the form of performance of Svadharma.

Non-performance of one's duty is what is meant by failing to follow the wheel of creation referred to above. And the term 'sensual' refers to him who forgetting his own duty, and attached to sense-objects, constantly indulges in the enjoyment of worldly objects through his senses and the sole object of whose life is to gratify his senses through such enjoyments by whatever means it may be possible. He who abandons his duty in this way, acting as he does under the impulse

of his craving for enjoyments, becomes self-willed, and solely preoccupied with his own selfish ends remains indifferent to the interests of others, which exerts an unhealthy influence on others and disturbs the smooth working of the universe. The whole creation suffers thereby. Therefore, he who neglecting his duty creates confusion in the world order commits a great offence; and again, in order to achieve his own selfish ends, he goes on accumulating wealth and power by unrighteous means throughout his life. That is why he has been declared as 'sinful'. He remains totally debarred from attaining the supreme goal of human existence. viz., gratifying all beings in this world through the performance of duty, and thereby realizing God, the embodiment of supreme beatitude, at the same time, and idly fritters away his valuable life through life-long indulgence in sense-enjoyments. Therefore, the verse says of him: "he lives in vain."

Here it may be asked: To what type of men attaches the responsibility of following the wheel of creation as stated above ? In order to show that responsibility for the performance of one's duty lies on every human being other than the God-realized saint, the next two verses declare that the enlightened soul has no obligation to discharge, giving reasons for the same:—

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः।
आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते॥ १७॥

तु but; यः मानवः the man who; आत्मरतिः rejoicing in the Self; एव only; च and; आत्मतृप्तः gratified with the Self; च and; आत्मनि in the self; एव only; सन्तुष्टः contented; स्यात् is, may be; तस्य for him; कार्यम् duty; obligation; न not; विद्यते exists.

He, however, who takes delight in the self alone and is gratified with the Self, and is contented in the self, has no duty. (17)

The word 'Tu' in this verse differentiates the enlightened soul from the generality of men, in whose case performance of allotted duty has in the preceding verses been declared as indispensable and obligatory, and failure on whose part to perform their duty earns for them the ignominious appellation of 'sinful', and renders their life unfruitful.

The qualifying expressions "taking delight in the Self", "gratified with the Self", and "contented in the Self"—all these refer to the God-realized saint. The word 'Mānavaḥ' indicates that every human being is capable of reaching this state after going through the necessary spiritual discipline; for it is open to every human soul to realize God.

The word 'Ātmaratiḥ followed by the indeclinable 'Eva' indicates that the God-realized saint looks upon this objective world even as one who has awakened from the dream state looks back upon his dream experience. Therefore, he entertains not the least attraction for any object of the world, and does not indulge in the enjoyment of worldly objects, but remains unshakably established in identity with God and God alone. For this reason his mind and intellect do not take delight in worldly objects; they remain naturally engaged in determining and reflecting on the character of God alone. This is what is meant by his delighting in the Self.

The adjective 'Ātmatṛptaḥ' indicates that all the desires of the God-realized soul having reached their state of fulfilment, he does not find any object in the world worthy of attainment, nor does he have the least use for any worldly object whatsoever. Established

in identity with God, he feels gratified for all time.

By speaking of the God-realized soul as contented in the Self, the verse shows that he remains ever contented in God; the greatest temptation of the world fails to lure him. He will on no account and under no circumstance feel dissatisfied; he maintains no connection with any object of the world, and transcending for ever all morbid feelings like joy and sorrow he remains ever contented in God.

The verse says that such a soul has no duty. It thereby, shows that the soul possessing the attributes stated above has realized God; therefore, all his duties have come to an end, and the object of his existence has been fully achieved. All the duties enjoined upon us have only one end in view, viz., to realize God, the embodiment of supreme blessedness. Therefore, he who has realized the object of his life will have nothing else to do. In that very realization all his duties reach their fulfilment.

The God-realized soul ceases to have any relation with his body, mind and intellect; therefore, he does nothing as a matter of fact. Nevertheless as a result of past habits, by force of Prārabdha, his mind, intellect and body continue in the eyes of the world to perform actions conforming to the injunctions of the scriptures. Being untouched by the ego, and untainted by any form of attachment or desire, such actions are extremely pure and ideal for others; and yet it should be borne in mind that the scriptures have no jurisdiction over the God-realized soul.

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन।
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥ १८ ॥

तस्य for him; इह here, in this world; कृतेन for things done; कश्चन any; अर्थः use; न (exists) not; अकृतेन for things not done; एव either; न there is no use; च and; अस्य for this (man); सर्वभूतेषु on all creatures; कश्चित् any; अर्थव्यपाश्रयः selfish dependence; न (there is) not.

In this world that great soul has no use whatsoever for things done nor for things not done; nor has he selfish dependence of any kind on any creature. (18)

The preceding verse stated that the God-realized saint has no duty; the same statement is confirmed here by arguments. The great soul who has realized God constantly remains contented in God, therefore, he has no worldly or other worldly end to serve through performance of any action, or renunciation of the same; for all his needs and requirements have come to an end, and there is nothing left for him to attain. Therefore, it is no longer obligatory for him to do anything, or to refrain from any activity; he is absolutely beyond the control of the scriptures. If his body, which is nothing but a combination of the mind and senses, takes to the performance of some action, the scriptures do not compel him to abandon the same; and if they fail to perform any action, the scriptures do not compel him to act. The man of knowledge need not, therefore, believe that in order to enjoy the bliss of liberation from bondage in this very life he is required even after enlightenment either to renounce action or to perform it; for after the dawn of Knowledge he ceases to have any relation with the trivial happiness resulting from the gratification of the mind and the senses; he gets merged for all time in eternal bliss, and himself becomes an embodiment of bliss. Therefore, he who feels that something remains to be done or renounced by him in order to enable him to attain some particular form of happiness is no man of Knowledge in the true sense of the term, but holds himself to be an illumined

soul, mistaking a particular stage in Sādhanā as the state of perfection. The marks of an enlightened soul mentioned in verse 17 do not admit of his entertaining any such belief. In order to establish this very fact the Lord states again in the Uttara-Gītā—

"The Yogī who has had his thirst fully quenched by a potion of the nectar of Knowledge, and has realized the object of his existence, has no duty left for him. If he has any duty left, he is not a man of Knowledge." (I.22)*

Just as the man of Knowledge has no purpose to serve either by undertaking any action or by renouncing the same, even so he has no interested connection with any being whatsoever. This has been brought out by the Lord in this verse through the statement that "he has no selfish dependence of any kind on any creature." It shows that the Sādhaka who is striving for God-realization, but whose identification with the body has not yet totally disappeared, may not crave for anything for his own personal gratification. Yet for the maintenance of his body he has to keep up selfish connection in one form or other with other beings. Therefore, it is incumbent on him to undertake or renounce certain actions in accordance with the injunctions of the scriptures. But the God-realized man of Knowledge, having no identification with the body, does not care even for his life; under such circumstances his body is maintained and all its requirements automatically met by the force of his Prārabdha. Therefore, he does not maintain any selfish relation with any being; and that is why he has no duty left in the world, the object of his life having been fully realized.

Does this mean that God-realized soul does not act at all ? No, he does not; and yet in the eyes of the world actions are automatically performed through his body under the impulse of Prārabdha for the maintenance of the world order. But inasmuch as he has no connection with those actions, they are not recognized as coming under the definition of 'action' at all.

Upto this point the Lord established by various arguments that until a man has realized God, the embodiment of supreme beatitude, it is indispensable for him to follow his 'Svadharma', i.e., to perform in a disinterested spirit duties devolving on him by virtue of his order in society and stage in life; and though all duties cease in the case of the God-realized soul, nevertheless under the impulse of his Prārabdha his mind and senses continue to act for the maintenance of the world order. Now, drawing Arjuna's attention to the above discussion, the Lord commands him to perform his duty without attachment:—

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः॥ १९॥

तस्मात् therefore; सततम् constantly; असक्तः unattached; कार्यम् worth doing obligatory; कर्म duty; समाचर perform well; हि because; असक्तः without attachment; कर्म work; आचरन् doing; पूरुषः man; परम् the Supreme; आप्नोति attains.

Therefore, go on efficiently doing your duty without attachment. Doing work without attachment man attains the Supreme. (19)

The word 'Tasmāt' connects this verse with the preceding one and pointing to the arguments advanced by the Lord in favour of the performance of 'Svadharma' impresses

* ज्ञानामृतेन तृप्तस्य कृतकृत्यस्य योगिनः। न चास्ति किंचित् कर्तव्यमस्ति चेन्न स तत्त्ववित्॥

on Arjuna that from a consideration of all those reasons it was clear that this highest good lay in the performance of 'Svadharma'. Therefore, he must perform his duty with due regard to his order in society and stage in life.

The word 'Asaktaḥ' indicates that Arjuna was required to perform his duty without attachment for it, or for the enjoyments that would follow as a reward for its performance. Renunciation of attachment implies renunciation of desire as well; for it is from attachment that desire springs up (II.62). It is, therefore, that renunciation of the desire for fruit has not been separately mentioned.

In verse 5 of this chapter the Lord has already shown that it is not possible for any one to remain inactive even for a moment; this proves that man is constantly engaged in action in one form or another. Therefore, using the word 'Satatam' in the verse, the Lord intends to point out to Arjuna that in every action he does every moment of his life he should give up attachment for it as well as for its fruit; in other words, he should do nothing under an impulse of attachment.

By using the adjective 'Kāryam' with the word 'Karma', the Lord has shown that Arjuna should only perform his duty allotted to him with due regard to his order in society, stage in life, nature and circumstances. He should not perform what is another's duty, or action prohibited by the scriptures, or idle action, or action for the fulfilment of a desire.

The word 'Samācara' (Sam+Ācara) shows that the duty has to be performed carefully, correctly and efficiently. If instead of this it is carelessly done the efficiency of the work is likely to suffer, which may cause delay in our reaching the supreme goal.

The second half of the verse shows the fruit of Karmayoga, when it says that "doing work without attachment man attains the Supreme." That is to say, he who performs his duty in the above manner renouncing attachment for the work and its fruit gets liberated from the bondage of Karma, and succeeds in realizing God. Such is the glory of Karmayoga and Arjuna is, therefore, urged by the Lord to perform every action in the above manner.

In the preceding verse, the Lord stated that he who acts without attachment realizes God. In support of it He cites in the next verse the instances of Janaka and others, and thereby impresses on Arjuna the desirability of engaging in action.

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः।
लोकसङ्ग्रहमेवापि सम्पश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि॥ २०॥

जनकादयः (wise) men like Janaka; कर्मणा through action (performed without attachment); एव only; संसिद्धिम् perfection; आस्थिताः reached; हि therefore; लोकसङ्ग्रहम् maintenance of the world order; सम्पश्यन् having an eye to; अपि too; कर्तुम् to act; एव only; अर्हसि you ought.

It is through action (without attachment) alone that Janaka and other wise men reached perfection. Having an eye to maintenance of the world order too you should take to action. (20)

The word 'Janakādayaḥ', in the present verse, points to all great souls like Aśvapati, Ikṣvāku, Prahlāda, Ambarīṣa and others, who had appeared on earth prior to the delivery of the present teaching, and who performed their duties as Janaka did, without claiming their authorship, and free from attachment and desire, with the sole object of realizing God. The statement in the preceding verse, that "doing work without attachment man attains God,"

is supported in this verse by citing the example of Janaka and other great souls who had attained perfection by performing action without attachment. This shows that many great souls had till that time succeeded in realizing God through the practice of Karmayoga (characterized by the absence of the feeling of meum, attachment and desire) which was not a new form of spiritual discipline those days. Therefore, there is no reason to doubt that it is an independent discipline and a sure way to God-realization.

Really speaking, God is realized only through Knowledge. But he whose heart gets purified through action without attachment attains that Knowledge as a matter of course through the grace of God (IV.38); and the Karmayogī who keeps his mind fixed on God realizes Him in no time (V.6). It is, therefore, that action without attachment has been declared here as a means to God-realization.

Maintaining the working of the world process by helping rather than hindering its orderly progress is what is meant by the word 'Lokasaṅgraha' in this verse. The Lord means to say that the responsibility for the maintenance and protection of all beings lies on man. Therefore, he who by efficiently performing his own duties with due regard to his order in society, stage in life, nature and circumstances helps others by the example of his own life to follow their own respective 'Svadharma', and give up wickedness and vice, supports the 'world order' by his action. When the Lord says that having an eye to the maintenance of the world order too Arjuna should take to action. He shows that while action without attachment is indispensable in the case of every seeker of blessedness for the attainment of the supreme object of existence, viz., God-realization, he should go on acting even from the point of view of maintaining the world order. In other words, he must continue to perform his duties realizing that neglect of duty on his part would put others who took him for their ideal and followed in his footsteps on a wrong track and lead them to neglect their duties, thus causing disturbance and disorder in the world-process. Therefore, looking to the interest of the world order it was improper for Arjuna to give up the performance of his duty.

A man of Knowledge has no duty of his own; therefore, whatever he does, he does only for the maintenance of the world order. But even the practicant, who has not yet attained perfection, can work in the interest of the world order, taking the man of knowledge for his ideal. Of course he cannot enact this role fully well. For selfishness cannot be totally eradicated till there is complete cessation of Ignorance; and so long as there is the least trace of selfishness in man, it is not possible for him to work only for the maintenance of the world order.

Though the man of Knowledge has no personal duty, it does not mean that whatever he does he does merely for show. Doing a thing merely for show without entertaining the least regard for it, is a form of hypocrisy. The man of Knowledge can never be guilty of hypocrisy. He does only that which he regards as essential and necessary from the point of view of maintaining the world order. He has neither the spirit of exhibition, nor attachment, nor desire, nor egoism. It is not possible for others to know what it is that inspires the actions of a man of Knowledge. That is why his actions are considered to be extraordinary and out of the common.

In the preceding verse Arjuna was advised by the Lord to take to action, looking to the interest of the world order. In connection with this it may be asked, how does action lead to the maintenance of the world order ? This is taken up for discussion in the next verse.

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते॥ २१॥

श्रेष्ठः a great man; यत् यत् whatever; आचरति does; इतरः other; जनः men (too); तत् तत् (perform) that thing; एव alone; सः he; यत् which; प्रमाणम् कुरुते sets up as a standard; लोकः the generality of men; तत् that; अनुवर्तते follows.

For whatever a great man does, that very thing other men also do; whatever standard he sets up; the generality of men follow the same (21)

The word 'Śresthaḥ', in this verse, refers to an illumined saint, or man of Knowledge, who has become known throughout the world for his noble virtues and ideal conduct, and is held in reverence by the generality of man and enjoys their confidence. If such a great man scrupulously performs the duties devolving on him by virtue of his order in society and stage in life, other common people automatically follow his example and remain engaged in performing the duties pertaining to their Varṇa and Āsrama with faith and reverence in their heart. This contributes to the efficient working of the world order, which goes on smoothly without any let or hindrance. But if an illumined saint or man of Knowledge gives up the performance of duties pertaining to his Varṇa and Āśrama, this creates an impression on the mind of the common people that no real virtue inheres in action; had there been any real worth in actions, they would not have been neglected by such a great soul; and following his lead, they unhesitatingly give up the performance of duties and the observance of rules pertaining to their Varṇa and Āśrama. Thus a terrible confusion follows and the whole world order is thrown into a state of chaos and disorder. Therefore, looking to the interests of the world order the man of Knowledge should go on carefully and efficiently performing all the duties appropriate to his Varṇa and Āśrama; he should neither neglect nor abandon those duties.

The common run of men begin to follow whatever the great man establishes by his precept and practice as the standard of morality, and perform their duties exactly on the lines laid down by the great man. This is what is meant by the statement that "whatever standard is set up by the great man, is followed by the generality of men." Therefore, the great and noble man of Knowledge, holding a position of honour in society, should in the interest of the world order very carefully perform his own duties and thus teach men to perform their duties. He should take particular care to see that by precept or practice he may not prejudice any useful custom or usage prevailing in a Varṇa or Āśrama and conserving the interests of humanity, or any item of tradition having connection with the basic virtues of man.

The whole of humanity does not follow a particular course of action. Duties of men vary according to place, time, social conditions, circumstances and the Varṇa and Āśrama to which they belong. It is not possible for a great and noble soul to practise severally all those duties himself so as to teach men their respective duties. Therefore, whatever action, sanctioned by the Vedas or by usage, he approves and pronounces by word of mouth to be proper and good, is accepted as a standard and followed by the people. This is what the Lord means by adding the second half, which appears only a repetition of the first half.

Thus showing how the actions of great men contribute to the interests of the world order, the Lord now proceeds in the next three verses to establish the necessity of performing the duties appropriate to one's Varṇa and Āśrama by citing His own example.

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि॥ २२॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā Arjuna; मे for Me; त्रिषु लोकेषु in the three worlds; किञ्चन कर्तव्यम् anything to do; न not; अस्ति (there) is; च and; अवाप्तव्यम् anything worth attaining; अनवाप्तम् unattained; न (is) not; कर्मणि in action; एव only; वर्त I persist.

Arjuna, there is nothing in all the three worlds for Me to do, nor is there anything worth attaining unattained by Me, Yet I continue to work. (22)

Arjuna has been addressed by the name of 'Pārtha' in the present verse. This name derives its origin from his mother, who bore two names, Pṛthā and Kuntī. In her childhood, so long as she lived with her real father Śūrasena, she was called by the name of Pṛthā; but after her adoption by Kuntibhoja she came to be known as Kuntī. The words 'Pārtha' and 'Kaunteya' owe their origin to these two names. Addressing Arjuna as 'Pārtha' in this verse, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa shows His endearment to him and points out His close relationship with him on the mother's side, in order, as if, to assure him while urging him to action that what He was preaching to him was not something commonplace or low. As a cousin, and dear relation, the Lord assures Arjuna that He is preaching to the latter what He Himself actually practises in life, and what is bound to do the highest good to him.

The Lord says that there is nothing in all the three worlds for Him to do. He means to point out that since man is primarily concerned with this world, duties are prescribed for him in this world with a view to the realization of the fourfold object of life, viz., Dharma (virtue), Artha (wealth), Kāma (enjoyment) and Mokṣa (liberation), He is, however, no mortal man but God Himself, the ordainer of duties for all beings, and is therefore present in all the three worlds,—heaven, earth and the subterranean regions. Yet He has no duty to perform in any of these three worlds.

By the statement that there was nothing in the three worlds unattained by the Lord, and yet He continued to work, He shows that though he required nothing for Himself and was not bound by any duty, being the universal Lord Himself, who had all His desires fulfilled, He yet worked in the interest of the world order out of compassion for all, and did not renounce activity. Therefore, no man should give up action under the false idea that since he has no attachment for enjoyments, nor requires anything for himself as the fruit of his actions he has no reason to work, or that having already attained the supreme state, it is no longer necessary for him to act. For even though he may not have any other reason to work, he should continue to act at least in the interest of the world order.

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः॥ २३॥

हि for; पार्थ O son Pṛthā, Arjuna; यदि if; जातु ever; अहम् I; अतन्द्रितः unwearied; कर्मणि in

action; न वर्तेयम् do not engage; मनुष्याः men; सर्वशः in all matters; मम My; वर्त्म way; अनुवर्तन्ते follow.

Should I not engage in action, scrupulously at any time, great harm will come to the world; for, Arjuna, men follow My way in all matters. (23)

In the preceding verse the Lord stated that though He had no duty to perform, yet He continued to work. With reference to this it may be asked. Why does the Lord engage in action, if really He has no duty to perform? The Lord gives His reason in two verses, which is indicated by the word 'Hi' used in this verse.

The Lord's descent on earth takes place in order to establish the rule of righteousness in society. Therefore, it can never be possible for Him, at any time, to neglect the performance of, or cease to perform any duty with all its limbs with sufficient vigilance and care. Nevertheless, in order to put forward a reason for His engaging in action, He says that if He did not perform action at any time, great harm would come to the world. In other words, being the Creator, Destroyer and Controller of the entire universe and being the Ideal Person for laying down propriety of conduct, if He ever neglected His duty a great disorganization would set in the world-process. This has been made clear by the Lord by the use of the words 'Yadi' and 'Jātu' in the present verse.

Lastly, the Lord says that people follow His way in all matters. Thereby He shows that some people regarded Him as very powerful and great, while some regarded Him as the Ideal Person; therefore, in whatever way He performed an action, people automatically tried to do it in that very way and thus imitated His ways. Under the circumstance, if He neglected the performance of any duty, that is to say, if he failed to do a thing efficiently and carefully, people would at once begin to imitate Him and would thus be deprived both of worldly happiness and of the highest good. Therefore, in order to teach the world how to act, He duly performed every action with great vigilance and care, and never allowed any inadvertence to cause a lapse.

उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम्।
सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥ २४॥

चेत् if; अहम् I; कर्म action; न कुर्याम् do not perform; इमे these; लोकाः worlds; उत्सीदेयुः will perish; च and; सङ्करस्य of confusion; कर्त्ता cause; स्याम् I should prove to be; इमाः these; प्रजाः people; उपहन्याम् (and) should destroy.

It I cease to act, these worlds will perish; nay, I should prove to be the cause of confusion, and of the destruction of these people. (24)

In the preceding verse the Lord showed the harm that would accrue if he did not carefully and properly perform his duties; while in the present verse He speaks of the harm that would accrue if He did not act, i.e., if He renounced action altogether. Therefore, the clause "if I cease to act", does not merely repeat the clause "should I not engage in action carefully" occurring in the preceding verse. Different ideas have been enunciated in the two verses.

When the Lord says, "If I cease to act, these worlds will perish," He shows that if He renounced action, other people too would do likewise, considering all works enjoined by the scriptures to be nothing but useless waste of time and energy; and under the impulse of love and hatred and carried away

by the downward course of Nature, they would begin to indulge in arbitrary and wicked actions, and following the example of one another all would become selfish, corrupt and immoral. Thus, attached to worldly enjoyments, and taking no account of the injury that might be done to others; they would begin to indulge in sinful actions prohibited by the scriptures and detrimental to the best interests of humanity for gaining their own selfish ends. As a result of this, they would be deprived of the fruit of human existence, and would be thrown after death into the wombs of lower species of beings, or into hell.

The word 'Saṅkarasya' in the present verse means every type of confusion in the social order. According to his order in society, stage in life, nationality, community, nature, place, geographical surroundings, the age in which he lives, the nation to which he belongs and his individual circumstances, everybody has his own particular Dharma or duty to perform. Ignoring the rules laid down by the scriptures if people fail to perform their duty, the whole social order gets disturbed, and the duties of the various classes get mixed up. Thus falling off from their respective duties, they all reach a degraded state, so that they not only lose their virtue, deviate from their duty and are degraded from their social order but the human element of their character gets almost lost. Therefore, in this verse, the Lord shows that if he abandoned the duties as enjoined by the scriptures, He would thereby be instrumental in creating confusion in the social order by showing the people by His example the way to abandon duties enjoined on them by the scriptures.

When man falls from his duty and all-round confusion spreads over all the ranks of society, he grows extremely selfish and getting addicted to sense-enjoyments, starts on a course of mutual destruction by various means. For the sake of trivial and momentary pleasures he does not hesitate to put an end to the life of a fellow-man. Tyranny becomes the order of the day, and the world is visited by natural calamities of various types, which destroy its resources of food and drink and bring many forms of suffering to man in the form of epidemics, droughts, floods, famines, fires, earthquakes and the fall of meteors. Men begin to die like flies and the whole world is treatened with destruction. Referring to this dreadful contingency the Lord says, "I should be the cause of destruction of these people," and thereby shows that if He abandoned the duties enjoined by the scriptures He would be responsible in the above manner for making people throw off all forms of restraint, and thus bringing about their eventual destruction.

Thus describing in three verses, by citing His own example, the consequences, on the one hand, of not doing action carefully, and on the other, of total renunciation of action, and proving that in the interest of the world order it is obligatory for all to perform their allotted duty, the Lord now urges on even the man of Knowledge to perform action with a view to maintenance of the world order:—

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसङ्ग्रहम् ॥ २५ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; कर्मणि to action; सक्ताः attached; अविद्वांसः the unwise; यथा as; कुर्वन्ति act; असक्तः unattached; विद्वान् the wise man; लोकसङ्ग्रहम् maintenance of the world order; चिकीर्षुः seeking; तथा so; कुर्यात् should act.

Arjuna, as the unwise act with attachment, so should the wise man, seeking maintenance of the world order, act without attachment. (25)

The word 'Karmaṇi', in this verse refers to the duties enjoined by the scriptures on every individual with due regard to his order in society, stage in life, nature and circumstances, and does not include either prohibited action or purposeless action; for the Lord inculcates the necessity of keeping the unwise engaged in such action, and urges on the wise men also to perform their duty like the unwise.

The expression "the unwise attached to action", in this verse, stands for those worldly-minded men of action who scrupulously perform the duties enjoined upon them by the scriptures strictly according to their sphere of action and possess full faith in devotion to and attachment for the scriptures as well as the works enjoined by them and their fruit. Being attached to action, they can neither be classed with the Karmayogīs of pure and Sāttvika intent, striving for blessedness, nor with the immoral Tāmasika men possessed of a demoniac, fiendish or delusive nature, inasmuch as they reverently perform works enjoined by the scriptures. They should therefore, be taken to belong to the class of men possessing a nature which partakes of the elements of Sattva and Rajas both, and who have been referred to in verses 42 to 44 of Chap. II under the name of the 'unwise' in verses 20 to 23 of Chap. VII under the epithet 'Alpamedhasām' (of meagre intelligence) and in verses 20, 21, 23 and 24 of Chap. IX as the 'worshippers of other gods'.

The devotion, zeal and earnestness with which a mother nurses her child, on account of her natural affection and attachment for the child as well as the prospect of receiving some return for her services in her old age, cannot be found elsewhere; even so he who possesses natural attachment for actions and the enjoyments that are obtained through them, and faith in the scriptures which prescribe them, duly performs all actions enjoined by the scriptures, with all their attendant limbs, with sincere faith, reverence and earnestness. This cannot be expected from one who possesses neither faith in the scriptures, nor any aptitude for actions enjoined by the scriptures. By the use of the words 'Yathā' and 'Tathā' in this verse, the Lord has therefore shown that even though the wise man is altogether free from egoism, the sense of doership, attachment and desire, nevertheless with the sole object of maintaining the world order he should scrupulously perform all works enjoined by the scriptures, with their attendant limbs, even as the unwise attached to action do.

The adjective 'Asaktaḥ', meaning 'without attachment', used with the word 'Vidvān' makes it clear that the latter has to be understood in the sense of a wise man who has realized God, and not in the sense of one who possesses mere book knowledge; for mere book knowledge does not make one free from attachment.

The word 'Cikīrṣuḥ (seeking), occuring in the second half of the verse, shows that even the man of Knowledge is not altogether free from desire. But it should be clearly understood that the desire which exists in an illumined soul is not an ordinary but an extraordinary type of desire. Words can neither describe nor convey any idea of the desire arising in the mind of one who is entirely free from desire. Only this much can be said with regard to this desire that it is a nominal desire and appears only in order to keep all ordinary people engaged in the performance of their duties. This type of desire is found to exist in God as well, and is really speaking no desire at all. Therefore,

the word 'Cikīrṣuḥ' should be understood to mean that only the right type of activity proceeds from the wise man in the interest of the world order so that the ordinary men going to imitate him may not abandon their duties and thereby bring ruin to themselves. As a matter of fact, no other motive can be ascribed to the actions of a saint.

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम्।
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन्॥ २६॥

युक्तः established (in the Self); **विद्वान्** the wise man; **कर्मसङ्गिनाम् अज्ञानाम्** of the ignorant attached to action; **बुद्धिभेदम्** unsettling the mind; **न जनयेत्** should not cause; **समाचरन्** duly performing (them himself); **सर्वकर्माणि** all (their) duties; **जोषयेत्** should get them to perform.

A wise man established in the Self, should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant attached to action, but should get them to perform all their duties, duly performing his own duties. **(26)**

As in the preceding verse, the word 'Vidvān', with the adjective 'Yuktaḥ', in this verse, stands for the wise man, who is free from attachment and firmly established in union with God.

Creating doubt in one's mind about the propriety of a religious practice followed by him for his spiritual evolution is what is meant by unsettling one's mind. Thus, if a man who is deeply attached to action and has faith in religious practices and in the scriptures prescribing such practices as well as in the enjoyments of the other world is presented with a point of view which undermines his faith in those practices as well as in the scriptures dealing with those practices, it will be tantamount to creating confusion in his mind. Therefore, when the Lord says in the present verse that the wise man should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant attached to action, He means that while instructing such men about disinterested action or about realization of the Ultimate Truth the wise man should take particular care not to utter or do anything which may undermine their faith or create doubt in their mind about the necessity of performing obligatory duties, or about the scriptures that deal with them; for if their faith in these is undermined they would, in the name of Knowledge and disinterested action give up whatever actions enjoined by the scriptures they have been performing even with an interested motive. That would, instead of raising them to a higher level of spiritual existence, degrade them to a lower level than their present one. Therefore, the Lord does not mean to say that the unwise should not be given any instruction about Knowledge or that they should not be enlightened about the secret of disinterested action; His intention is only to show that the wise man should never allow the thought to enter the mind of the ignorant that action is unnecessary for the realization of Truth or that action is no more necessary after such realization. Nor should they be allowed to entertain the idea that where there is no desire for fruit, there is no necessity for the pursuit of action; nor again should they be kept tied down to the erroneous conception that the highest goal of human existence is to attain heaven through the performance of action with an interested motive and with attachment to its fruit, and that there is no duty higher than this. On the other hand, while trying to banish from their mind all worldly attachment and desire, the wise man should endeavour by his conduct and instruction to keep the unwise engaged in the performance of their

duties with the same amount of faith and reverence.

It is no doubt true that when the unwise perform the duties enjoined by the scriptures, they do so with faith and reverence in their heart. But when they hear discourses on the realization of Truth, or on the necessity of renouncing desire for the fruit of actions, they generally fail to grasp the true import of those teachings, and begin wrongly to imagine that action is unnecessary for the attainment of true Knowledge or for one who has no attachment for its fruit. Necessarily, therefore, action in his estimate occupies a lower place in the field of spiritual discipline. Influenced by this line of thought they develop an inclination towards renunciation of action, and in the end, giving up out of ignorance the performance of obligatory duties, become easy victims of sloth and error. Therefore, in this verse, the Lord urges on the wise man to perform efficiently and without attachment all his duties and thereby set up an ideal before others which may not undermine their faith and interest in action enjoined by the scriptures and whereby they may be encouraged to perform their actions scrupulously and disinterestedly or without claiming their doership, and thereby realize the object of their human existence.

Thus urging on the wise man, in two verses, to perform duties enjoined by the scriptures from the point of maintaining the world order, the Lord proceeds in the next two verses to differentiate the man of knowledge from the common run of men attached to action.

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः।
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते॥ २७॥

कर्माणि (all) actions; सर्वशः in every way; प्रकृतेः of Prakṛti (Primordial Matter); गुणैः by modes; क्रियमाणानि are being performed; अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा (the fool) whose mind is deluded by egoism; अहम् I; कर्ता (am) the doer; इति so; मन्यते thinks.

All actions are being performed by the modes of Prakṛti (Primordial Matter). The fool, whose mind is deluded by egoism, thinks: "I am the doer." **(27)**

It is the three qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—born of Prakṛti—which are transformed into the twenty-three categories, consisting of the intellect, ego and mind, the five subtle elements of ether, etc., the ten organs of perception and action and the five objects of senses, viz., sound, etc. All these are modes of Prakṛti. Among these, the function of the intellect is to analyse and ascertain an object, that of the mind is to reflect on an object, that of the ear to hear a sound, that of the skin to touch something, that of the eye to see a form, that of the tongue to taste, that of the nose to smell, that of speech to utter sound, that of the hands to grasp something, that of the feet to move, and that of the organs of defecation and urination to pass excreta. The word 'actions' includes all these functions. Therefore, when the Lord says in this verse that 'all actions are being performed by the modes of Prakṛti," He intends to bring out that whatever actions take place in this world, and however, are nothing but the operation of the aforesaid modes of Prakṛti, and the absolute and formless Ātmā (Self) has really nothing to do with them.

The body is nothing but an aggregate of the above twenty-three categories, viz., the intellect, ego and mind, the five subtle elements, the ten organs of perception and action, and the five objects of the senses.

The feeling of 'I' in respect of this body, or in other words deep-rooted self-identification with the same, is called the 'ego'. The unwise man, whose mind is completely deluded by this feeling of 'I' which has come down from time without beginning, in other words, whose power of discrimination has been lost, on account of which he is unable to differentiate the Spirit from Matter and does not realize Himself as pure Spirit, altogether distinct from the body, or as an eternal fraction of God is referred to in this verse by the word 'Ahaṅkāravimūḍhātmā', The word cannot, therefore, be interpreted to mean the Sādhaka following the path of Karmayoga, who is free from attachment and endowed with discrimination. For his mind is not deluded by the ego, on the other hand, he is engaged in the attempt to eradicate the ego.

Even though, as a matter of fact, the soul has no relation with actions, the unwise man, identifying himself with the body consisting of the twenty-three elements, associates himself with the different actions of the body, and thus assumes himself to be the doer of those actions. In other words, he thinks it is he who resolves, he who reflects, he who hears, he who sees, he who eats, he who drinks, sleeps, walks, and so on, and thus traces every action to himself. That is why action becomes the cause of bondage to him; and that is why in order to reap the fruits of those actions he has to go through the process of repeated births and deaths.

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः।
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते॥ २८॥

तु but; महाबाहो O mighty-armed Arjuna; गुणकर्मविभागयोः about the respective spheres of Guṇas (modes of Prakṛti) and actions; तत्त्ववित् the knower of Truth; गुणाः the modes of Prakṛti; गुणेषु among the Guṇas (in the shape of objects of perception); वर्तन्ते move; इति so; मत्वा holding; न not; सज्जते gets attached (to them).

He, however, who has true insight into the respective spheres of Guṇas (modes of Prakṛti) and their actions, holding that it is the Guṇas (in the shape of the senses, mind, etc.,) that move among the Guṇas (objects of perception), does not get attached to them, Arjuna. (28)

The word 'Tu', in this verse, has been used to bring out clearly the difference of outlook between the man of knowledge and the man of ignorance, as described in verse 27 above.

The word 'Guṇavibhāga' denotes the twenty-three categories which are the products of the three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and which have been referred to in the commentary of the preceding verse. The three dispositions of the mind, known as Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika which determine the character of action as Sāttvika, Rājasika or Tāmasika, and with reference to which a man is spoken of as possessed of Sāttvika qualities, another as possessed of Rājasika qualities, and a third as possessed of Tāmasika qualities,—all these modifications of the mind also fall under category of the Guṇas.

The word 'Karmavibhāga' denotes the different actions that proceed from the above Guṇas, and have been described in the course of the commentary on the preceding verse, the sense of doership and attachment with regard to which cause man's bondage. Both

these categories of the Guṇas and their actions are nothing but extensions of the modes of Prakṛti. Therefore, they all pertain to matter, and are by nature ephemeral, perishable, subject to modifications, illusory, and appearing without any real foundation like an unsubstantial dream. True insight into both these categories consists in realizing the fact that the soul stands apart from both these categories of the Guṇas and their actions and has no relation with them whatsoever, that it is wholly devoid of attributes, formless, changeless, eternal, pure, free and the very embodiment of knowledge.

The Jñānayogī who has thus obtained true insight into the categories of the Guṇas and actions, attributes every action of the mind, intellect, senses and the body to the fact that it is the products of these Guṇas in the shape of all instruments of perception such as the mind, intellect and senses that are moving within the sphere of their respective objects, which are also products of the Guṇas and that he has no relation with either. It is therefore that he does not get attached either to any actions or to the fruits of such actions in the shape of agreeable or disagreeable experiences; in other words, he does not associate himself with either. He looks upon both the Guṇas and their actions as transient, material and subject to change and perishable and himself as eternal, pure, awakened, changeless, a non-doer and absolutely unattached. Verses 8 and 9 of Chapter V, and, again, verse 19 of Chap. XIV reiterate the same truth.

Showing thus the distinction between the outlook of the generality of men attached to action and that of the Jñānayogī, the Lord now urges on the exalted soul who has fully realized the nature of the Self not to unsettle the ignorant folk attached to action.

प्रकृतेर्गुणसम्मूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु।
तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत्॥ २९॥

प्रकृतेः of Prakṛti; गुणसम्मूढाः completely deluded by the Guṇas; गुणकर्मसु to (those) Guṇas and actions; सज्जन्ते remain attached; तान् those; अकृत्स्नविदः insufficiently knowing; मन्दान् fools; कृत्स्नवित् the man of perfect Knowledge; न विचालयेत् should not unsettle (the minds of).

Those who are completely deluded by the Guṇas (modes) of Prakṛti remain attached to those Guṇas and actions; the man of perfect Knowledge should not unsettle the mind of those insufficiently knowing fools. (29)

The word 'Guṇasammūḍhāḥ' in this verse stands for those worldly-minded and unenlightened men attached to action who have already been referred to in verse 25 and 26, whose nature is constituted of Rajoguṇa mixed up with the quality of Sattva, and who are engaged in performing actions with faith and attachment for the same and out of desire for obtaining enjoyments in this world and the next. It cannot refer to those sinless men of a Sāttvika nature who are engaged in spiritual discipline with the object of God-realization; for they are not deluded By the modes of Prakṛti. Nor can it refer to men of a Tāmasika temperament, who are addicted to prohibited action; for having no faith in the scriptures they neither perform nor have any attachment for the performance of prescribed duties. Therefore, there can be no question of dissuading one from undermining the faith of these men of a Tāmasika nature in action; on the other hand, their faith in the scriptures has to be fostered with a view to winning them over from their addiction to

prohibited actions and induce them to take up the performance of prescribed duties with diligence and care.

"Deluded by the Guṇas, these worldly-minded men remain attached to the Guṇas and actions." By making this statement, the Lord intends to show that such men possess no knowledge of any happiness that lies beyond the range of Prakṛti; in their view highest form of happiness lies in the enjoyments of the world. That is why they remain attached to enjoyments, which are products of the three Guṇas, as well as to actions which are the means of obtaining such enjoyments. They never seek or endeavour to free themselves from the bondage of these Guṇas.

The words 'Akṛtsnavidaḥ' and 'Mandān', accompanied by the word 'Tān' show that men of the type described above, who work with interested motives, although they have no full knowledge of the real truth or of the highest goal of human existence, nevertheless because they possess faith in the duties prescribed by the scriptures and their fruits, do possess some amount of knowledge, however insufficient. Therefore, they are much superior to those unruly and wayward men of a Tāmasika nature, who regard vice as virtue and virtue as vice. They are not totally devoid of intelligence, only they are men of meagre intelligence. Therefore their actions, instead of leading to God-realization, bring them perishable enjoyments of the world.

The word 'Kṛtsnavit', in the present verse, stands for the illumined saint, who having thoroughly understood the truth about the spheres of the Guṇas and their actions as described above has fully realized the true nature of God. By asking such men not to unsettle the mind of those men of insufficient knowledge, the Lord means that it is not advisable to dissuade men who have faith in action and perform actions with interested motives from actions enjoined by the scriptures or to weaken their faith and interest in the performance of such actions by placing before them argumetns showing that action involves much strain and exertion, that action is of no avail, that the world is but an illusion, and that all action leads to bondage; for this may lead to their downfall. The real truth of spiritual knowledge should therefore be brought home to them keeping undisturbed their faith in actions prescribed by the scriptures, in the fruits of such actions, as well as in the scriptures prescribing them. At the same time, they should be taught to perform Sāttvika actions (XVIII.23) with faith, diligence and earnestness, or practise the Sāttvika form of renunciation (XVIII.9), giving up attachment, the sense of doership and the desire for fruit, so that they may easily understand the truth and be properly initiated into its secrets.

In response to Arjuna's prayer to tell him definitely the one discipline by which he might obtain the highest good, the Lord established from verse 4 up to this point that in whatever state one may be, he should continue to perform the duties prescribed for him by the scriptures, according to his order in society, stage in life, nature and circumstances. In order to establish this point, the Lord made the following observations one after another in the preceding verses:—

(1) *Without performing action, man does not attain actionlessness, or perfection in Karmayoga* (III.4).
(2) *Merely by renouncing action, man does not attain perfection in Jñānayoga* (III.4).
(3) *Man cannot remain totally inactive even for a moment* (III.5).
(4) *Outwardly renouncing action and mentally dwelling on the objects of senses, is hypocrisy* (III.6).

(5) *He who performs action disinterestedly, controlling the mind and senses, is the best of men* (III.7).
(6) *Action is superior to inaction* (III.8).
(7) *Desisting from action, one cannot even maintain the body* (III.8).
(8) *Action performed for the sake of sacrifice causes no bondage, but leads to salvation* (III.9).
(9) *Action has been enjoined upon man by the Creator, Brahmā, and disinterested performance of action leads to the highest good* (III.10,11).
(10) *He who enjoys objects without performing his duty is a thief* (III.12).
(11) *He who derives his sustenance from what is left after sacrifice, just for the sake of keeping up his body, gets absolved of all sins* (III.13).
(12) *He who, without performing sacrifices, cooks food only for nourishing his body is a sinner* (III.13).
(13) *He who, abandoning his duties, hinders the operation of the wheel of creation, leads a sinful life and lives in vain* (III.16).
(14) *Doing work without attachment, man attains God* (III.19).
(15) *It was through action that Janaka and others reached perfection in ancient times* (III.20).
(16) *Other men imitate what a great man does; therefore, a great man should perform action* (III.21).
(17) *God has no duty, and yet He works with a view to maintaining the world order* (III.22).
(18) *The wise man has no duty, and yet he should work in the interest of the world order* (III.25).
(19) *A wise man should in no way deter men from the performance of their duty by renouncing action himself or by instructing men to do so, but should perform duties himslef and get others to do the same* (III.26).
(20) *The man of perfect knowledge should not unsettle the minds of men attached to action by instructing them to renounce their prescribed duties* (III.29).

Showing by these arguments the indispensable necessity of performing action, the Lord now, in response to Arjuna's Prayer contained in verse 2, tells him the best discipline for the attainment of highest good, and commands Arjuna to fight.

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्न्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ ३० ॥

अध्यात्मचेतसा with (your) mind fixed on the Self (Me); सर्वाणि all; कर्माणि actions; मयि to Me; सन्न्यस्य dedicating; निराशीः without hope; निर्ममः devoid of the feeling of 'mine'; विगतज्वरः (and) cured of mental fever; भूत्वा becoming; युध्यस्व fight.

Therefore, dedicating all actions to Me with your mind fixed on Me, the Self of all, freed from hope and the feeling of meum and cured of mental fever, fight. (30)

The word 'Cetas' forming part of the compound word 'Adhyātmacetasā' stands for the mind which has developed faith in God, the inner witness of all hearts, after a due recognition of His virtues, glory and real nature, and thinking of Him constantly and

under every circumstance. He who dedicates his actions to God with the help of such a mind realizes God to be almighty, all-pervading and omniscient, the support of all, the universal Lord, the supreme object of realization, the supreme goal, the greatest well-wisher, the best and dearest friend, and supremely kind. Recognizing the body accompanied by the mind and senses and all their actions as well as all objects of the world as belonging to God, he renounces all attachment and the sense of possession with regard to them. He believes that he is absolutely powerless, that it is God Himself who lends him the necessary power and is getting everything duly performed by him according to His own will and that he is a mere tool in his hands. In this way he regards himself as wholly subordinate to God, and goes on performing all actions as a mere puppet for His sake and under His inspiration and guidance, and according to His directions, mentally renouncing all connection with those actions and with their fruits, and taking everything as belonging to Him. Such a man is said to have dedicated all his actions to God with the mind fixed on Him. Verse 6 of Chap. XII, and verses 57 and 66 of Chap. XVIII similarly speak of surrendering all actions and duties to God.

The sense of possession, hope and mental fever cease to exist in him who has thus dedicated all his actions and duties to God and always keeps his mind fixed on Him. It is in order to bring home this truth to Arjuna that the Lord advises him in this verse to engage himself in the fight after conquering these evils. The Lord intends to show that transferring the responsibility for all his actions to Him, Arjuna should rid himself of all morbid feelings such as hope and the sense of possession, love and hatred, joy and grief, etc., and should carry on the fight according to His commands after that. Therefore, so long as while performing actions or enjoying their fruit a Sādhaka is found to have the feeling of possession and desire with regard to those actions and their fruit, or so long as his mind is subject to morbid feelings such as attraction and repulsion, joy and grief, etc., it should be clearly understood that all his actions have not been dedicated to God.

Thus revealing to Arjuna the definite discipline that would lead to his highest good, and commanding him to fight, the Lord proceeds in the next verse to declare the fruit of the practice of this discipline:—

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ ३१ ॥

ये मानवाः the men who; अनसूयन्तः uncavilling; श्रद्धावन्तः (and) devout; मे My; इदम् this; मतम् teaching; नित्यम् always; अनुतिष्ठन्ति follow; ते they; अपि even; कर्मभिः from (the bondage of) actions; मुच्यन्ते are released.

Even those men who, with an uncavilling and devout mind, always follow this teaching of Mine are released from the bondage of all actions. (31)

The use of the word 'Mānavāḥ with the adjective 'Ye' in this verse brings out the fact that the pursuit of the discipline thus revealed to Arjuna is not intended to be confined to any particular community, or to any particular individual. All men are qualified to pursue it. Dedicating all their duties and actions to God in the above manner, men belonging to any and every caste or order, nationality or community may follow it.

The two words 'Śraddhāvantaḥ' and 'Anasūyantaḥ' used in the verse indicate that those who find fault with the Lord, and look upon Him as an ordinary human being rather than God Himself, and have no faith in Him, are not qualified for the pursuit of this discipline. It can be pursued only by him who never finds fault with the Lord, and always cherishes faith in and devotion to the Lord. Therefore, those who desire to pursue this discipline should acquire these qualifications. Without these qualifications, it is difficult even to understand the implications of this discipline, to say nothing of pursuing it.

The teaching of the Lord is no doubt eternally true; hence the adjective 'Nityam' may as well be taken to qualify the word 'Matam'. But in the context of this verse, it appears more appropriate to treat it as an adjunct to 'Anutiṣṭhanti'. It thus means that the Sādhaka should dedicate once for all his actions to God and should carry on all his duties in that spirit of dedication. The use of the word 'even' (Api) in the clause 'even they get released' is intended to show that when by pursuing this discipline it is possible even for ordinary men to get over the binding effect of actions i.e., to attain freedom for all time from the bondage of births and deaths, and realize God, the very embodiment of supreme bliss, it should be much easier for Arjuna to attain that state.

Describing thus the fruit of following the above teaching, the Lord now shows the harm in not following it.

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम्।
सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥ ३२ ॥

तु but; ये (they) who; अभ्यसूयन्तः carping (at Me); मे My; एतत् this; मतम् teaching; न not; अनुतिष्ठन्ति follow; तान् those; अचेतसः fools; सर्वज्ञानविमूढान् deluded in the matter of all knowledge; नष्टान् lost; विद्धि know.

They, however, who, finding fault with this teaching of Mine, do not follow it, take those fools to be deluded in the matter of all knowledge, and lost. (32)

The word 'Tu' indicates that the present verse describes the fate of those who follow a course which is quite the reverse of that followed by the Sādhakas referred to in the preceding verse.

Treating the Lord as an ordinary human being, and entertaining or propagating the idea that He has imparted this teaching in order to elicit the homage of the people, and that it is absurd to think that one gets released from the bondage of Karma by merely surrendering all actions to Him, and so on— this is what is meant by "finding fault with this teaching." And following the above arguments he who refuses to renounce the sense of possession, attachment and desire, and instead of offering all actions to God, follows the dictates of his own will and abandons the duties and actions enjoined by the scriptures, is said to flout this teaching of the Lord.

The word 'Acetasaḥ' refers to those stupid and depraved men of a Tāmasika disposition, whose mind is full of evil thoughts and evil impulses and who possess neither discrimination nor self-control. The reason of this type of men gets perverted, on account of which they entertain wrong notions about the means of happiness in this world and the next; that is why they get addicted to evil ways. This brings about their degradation in this world, as well as in the next. They fall from their human state, and on leaving this

body have to expiate their sins by taking birth in the lower species of animals such as the dog and the swine, or going through the terrible tortures of hell.

The preceding verse stated that those who do not follow the above teaching of the Lord are lost. On this it may be asked; What harm will accrue to the man who instead of performing his duties in accordance with the above teaching of the Lord wilfully renounces all activities ? In answer to this, the Lord says:—

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति॥ ३३॥

भूतानि (all) living creatures; प्रकृतिम् (their) nature; यान्ति follow; ज्ञानवान् the wise (man); अपि too; स्वस्याः प्रकृतेः सदृशम् according to the tendencies of his own nature; चेष्टते acts; निग्रहः restraint; किम् what; करिष्यति can do.

All living creatures follow their tendencies; even the wise man acts according to the tendencies of his own nature. What use is any external restraint ? (33)

By the statement that "all living creatures follow their tendencies" the Lord shows in this verse that just as the water of the various rivers naturally flows towards the ocean, and none can forcibly obstruct its course, even so all living beings tied down to their own nature are drifting along the course of nature towards Nature itself. Therefore it is not possible for anybody to renounce all his activities forcibly. Of course, even as the course of a river can be turned from one direction to another, so can man by changing the aim of his life turn the course of life from one direction to another. In other words, renouncing likes and dislikes, he can utilize his actions as aids to God-realization.

The word 'Prakṛti' here denotes the distinctive nature of an individual, representing the sum-total of tendencies of actions done in previous lives and stored up in his mind.

The 'Jñānavān' refers to the God-realized saint who knows the real truth about God.

The word 'Api' shows that when even the wise man, who has risen above all the Guṇas, acts according to the tendencies of his own nature, much less can the ignorant man, who is completely under the sway of Prakṛti, forcibly arrest the course of Prakṛti.

In this connection it must be conceded that the nature of even God-realized saints varies in each individual case. This difference is inevitable owing to differences in the course of discipline which was followed by them, and diversity in the nature of the Prārabdha which has been responsible for their birth.

The illumined soul, in fact, has nothing to do with the latencies of Karma, nor does he perform any action. Of course, seeds of Prārabdha, sowed by him in his previous lives remain stored in his mind, and it is by force of these seeds that his intellect, mind and senses function of their own accord without any agent just for the fruition of that Prārabdha and in the interest of the world order. Attributing these actions of the intellect, mind and sense to the man of Knowledge from the point of view of the world, it is alleged that "the wise man too acts according to the tendencies of his own nature." Inasmuch as the actions of the wise man take place without any agent, they are altogether free from likes and dislikes; and the sense of doership as well as the feeling of possession are

also absent in them. That is why they are nothing more than mere gestures of action, and cannot be called actions as such. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by the use of the verb 'Ceṣṭate'.

The wise man, in fact, ceases to have any connection with the mind; much less can he have any connection with the modifications of the mind in the shape of noble qualities or morbid feelings. But it must be remembered in this connection that even the mind of the wise man becomes exceptionally pure. A Sādhaka succeeds in realizing God only when through the constant practice of meditation on God the evils of impurity and distraction and the veil of ignorance have totally disappeared from the mind. Therefore, morbid feelings like egoism; the sense of possession, attraction and repulsion, joy and grief, hypocrisy and duplicity, lust and anger, greed and infatuation and so on, which have their root in Nescience, cannot exist in that mind, they totally disappear from it. That is why in the exceptionally pure and unsullied mind of the saint virtues like equanimity, contentment, compassion, forgiveness, desirelessness and tranquillity etc., naturally reveal themselves, and it is under the impulse of these sentiments that actions enjoined by the scriptures continue to be performed by his mind, senses and body in the interest of the world order. All forms of vice and evil conduct take leave of him for good.

Although in the stories narrated in the Purāṇas and the class of literature known by the name of 'Itihāsa' (history) we come across a number of episodes which go to show that evil impulses of lust, anger etc., appear even in the mind of wise men and perfect souls, and influence the actions proceeding from their senses, it must be remembered in this connection that positive injunctions (Vidhi-Vākyas) contained in the scriptures possess a greater force than such episodes; and ordinances of an interdictory nature (Niṣedha-Vākyas) are even more authoritative than positive injunctions. Moreover, it is difficult to make out the inner meaning of the episodes we come across in the stories of the Purāṇas and other books. The right conclusion, under such circumstances, seems to be that if the mind of any of the saints referred to in those stories was really possessed by the evil impulses of lust, anger etc., and their actions were also swayed by them, they were not, really speaking, God-realized saints; for, nowhere in the scriptures do we come across positive injunctions which may lead us to conclude that such evil propensities do exist in the mind of an illumined soul. On the other hand, we find the scriptures denying at many places the existence of evil propensities in an enlightened soul. Even in the Gītā, wherever we find the characteristics of God-realized saints mentioned, they are invariably declared to be totally free from attraction and repulsion, lust and anger and other forms of vice and evil conduct (V.26, 28; XII.17). If however, in the interest of the world order, they ever found it necessary to act under these impulses as in a drama, such an action on their part cannot be held to be blame worthy.

By saying "what use is external restraint ?" it is shower that none can forcibly remain inactive even for a moment (III.5); he would be helplessly driven by his nature to act (XVII.59, 60). Therefore, instead of seeking to obtain release from the bondage of Karma through renunciation of prescribed duties, one should attempt to free himself from such bondage while continuing to perform actions enjoined by one's own nature. One can succeed only by following this latter method. Renunciation of prescribed duties, on the other hand, would make him wayward and unruly, and would further

tighten the knot of bondage and bring about his downfall.

Evil actions, prohibited by the scriptures, proceed from attraction and repulsion; whereas noble deeds sanctioned by the scriptures are mainly inspired by faith, devotion and other virtues. Man is free to renounce evils like attraction and repulsion, lust and anger, etc., and awaken faith, devotion and other virtues. Therefore, abandoning vices, and cherishing in his heart faith in and devotion to God and the scriptures, man should perform his duties for the pleasure of God. He who performs action, keeping this ideal before him, can never be guilty of any prohibited action. He will perform only virtuous deeds; and they too will always be conducive to liberation and will never lead to bondage. In other words, man is not free to restrain his actions; he will invariably be driven to action. But every body is free to reform his nature by cultivating the Sāttvika virtues. Even as his nature will progressively improve, his actions will automatically become purer and purer. Therefore, depending on God, everyone should attempt to reform his nature. This is the only way to elevate oneself.

If everybody must act according to the tendencies of his nature, what should he do to attain freedom from the bondage of Karma ? In answer to this question, the Lord says:—

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ॥ ३४॥

इन्द्रियस्य इन्द्रियस्य of each sense; अर्थे in the object; रागद्वेषौ attraction and repulsion; व्यवस्थितौ are rooted; तयोः of these two; वशम् under the sway; न आगच्छेत् one should not come; हि because; तौ both of them (are); अस्य his; परिपन्थिनौ enemies (standing in the way of his redemption).

Attraction and repulsion are rooted in all sense-objects. Man should never allow himself to be swayed by them, because they are the two principal enemies standing in the way of his redemption. (34)

The word 'Indriyasya' has been used twice in this verse with reference to the word 'Arthe'. The intention of this is to show that the word covers all the senses of preception viz., the eye, the ear etc., and all the organs of action viz., speech etc., and the mind, and to indicate that attraction and repulsion are rooted severally in the various objects of each of these senses including the mind, i.e., in each object with which they come in contact or from which they get dissociated.

Man feels attracted towards an object, being or even what appears favourable to him,— which reacts agreeably on his mind. And he conceives an aversion for that which reacts disagreeably on his mind or appears unfavourable to him. Agreeability and disagreeability do not inhere in a particular object as such, it is the attitude of mind with regard to it which makes the same thing appear as agreeable to one individual, and disagreeable to another. And the same thing which appears agreeable to a particular individual at one time appears disagreeable to the same individual at another. Therefore, attraction and repulsion lie hidden in all sense-objects. That is to say, one feels attraction and aversion for all things; for whenever man comes into contact with them, or is disunited from them, attraction and repulsion make their appearance.

While performing duties and actions prescribed by the scriptures, one's mind and senses are sure to come in contact with sense-objects, or get disunited from them; but during such contact or dissociation he who does not conceive an object, being or event as favourable or unfavourable, and remaining eventempered in success and failure, victory and defeat, gain or loss etc., does not give way to joy or grief is said to be above attraction and repulsion. For it is only when a man is swayed by these impulses, that he perceives diversity everywhere and gives way to the morbid feelings of joy and grief. Therefore, surrendering himself to God, man should try to rise completely above attraction and repulsion.

Giving way to attraction and repulsion due to ignorance, and regarding the transient worldly enjoyments as the source of happiness, man strays away from the path leading to spiritual bliss. The two impulses of attraction and repulsion, deceiving the Sādhaka, entangle him in the mesh of worldly objects and thus placing obstacles in the path of his spiritual progress rob him of his invaluable possession in the shape of human existence. The result is that he cannot realize the highest object of human existence, and coming under the sway of these impulses, abandons his own duty, and adopts the duty of another, or resorts to various forms of prohibited acts for the sake of worldly enjoyments. As the result of this, he meets with a tragic fate even after death. That is why the impulses of attraction and repulsion have been referred to as the two principal enemies of man standing in the way of his redemption.

Suppose a traveller who is proceeding towards his destined goal meets some robbers on the way, who make friendly gestures to him and conspiring with his fellow-travellers and the driver of his coach and others succeed with their help in misguiding his judgment. Nay, by tempting him with offers of fictitious enjoyments they entrap him by their lubricating words and turning him away from his destination take him to an unknown forest in the opposite direction, where they strip him of all his possessions and throw him into a deep pit. Even so these two impulses of attraction and repulsion appear in a friendly garb before the Sādhaka on the spiritual path and quietly enter his mind and senses, and robbing him of his judgment and throwing before him the temptation of worldly enjoyments, drag him into evil ways. Thereby the course of his Sādhanā or spiritual discipline is arrested and he has to go through terrible suffering in hell as the result of his evil deeds.

At this point, the thought might arise in Arjuna's mind that he might easily succeed in getting rid of the impulses of attraction and repulsion by engaging in peaceful pursuits, and maintaining himself by alms, instead of taking to a dreadful pursuit like participation in a fight. Anticipating this, the Lord says:—

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः॥ ३५॥

स्वनुष्ठितात् परधर्मात् to the duty of another well performed; **विगुणः** devoid of merit; **स्वधर्मः** one's own duty; **श्रेयान्** (is) preferable; **स्वधर्मे** in (the performance of) one's own duty; **निधनम्** death; **श्रेयः** (is) conducive of good; **परधर्मः** another's duty; **भयावहः** (is) fraught with fear.

One's own duty, though devoid of merit, is preferable to the duty of another well performed. Even death in the performance of one's own duty brings blessedness; another's duty is fraught with fear. (35)

The adjectives 'Viguṇaḥ' and 'Svanuṣṭhitāt, qualifying 'Svadharmaḥ' and 'Paradharmāt' respectively carry the sense of 'partially' 'performed' and 'full of merits' in addition to their primary meaning of 'devoid of merit' and 'well performed' respectively. One should also remember in this connection that the special duties of the Brāhmaṇa are higher than those of the Vaiśya and the Kṣatriya etc., inasmuch as they involve the practice of virtues like non-violence etc., to a greater degree than in the case of the latter. Even so the duties prescribed for the recluse are higher and more sacred than the duties of a householder, and the duties of the Vaiśya and the Kṣatriya are nobler than the duty of the Śūdra. Understood in this light, the words 'the duty of another, well performed' signify duties which though full of merits, and scrupulously performed with all their limbs, are yet not prescribed for the performer, but have been prescribed for others. The statement that "one's own duty, though devoid of merit, is preferable to the duty of another well performed", should, therefore, be taken to mean that just as it is always good and meritorious for a woman to serve her own husband, even though the latter may have a repulsive appearance and may be devoid of merits, even so the duty prescribed for a particular individual, though deficient in merit and imperfectly performed, is good and beneficial for him. This is all the more true of a duty which is full of all virtues, and which has at the same time been thoroughly performed in all its details.

Actions which have been prescribed for a particular individual by the scriptures with due regard to his order in society, stage in life, nature and circumstances constitute his own duty. This should be taken to mean that lying, hypocrisy, theft, violence, swindling, adultery and other prohibited actions are no man's duty; and even so optional acts, performed with a particular object in view, are obligatory for none; hence, they too fall beyond the range of one's duty. Besides these, the duties specifically prescribed for members of a particular order in society or for a particular Āśrama or stage in life, and which men belonging to any other Varṇa or Āśrama are not qualified to perform, constitute the specific duty or 'Svadharma' of men of that Varṇa or Āśrama. Duties such as the study of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices etc., to which all members of the twice-born classes are entitled, constitute the duty of the twice-born; and pursuits which are open to men and women of all classes and orders, such as the practice of devotion to God, truthfulness, service of one's parents, control over the mind and senses, and observance of the vows of continence, non-violence, non-stealing contentment, compassion, charity, forgiveness, purity and humility etc., constitute the common duty of man.

Here it may be asked: How is the duty of one particular individual as against the duty of another to be determined in a society which neither follows the system of social organization known as the Varṇāśrama Dharma (which divides society into four orders or Varṇas and the life-span of each individual into four stages or Āśramas), nor believes in the eternal religion of the Vedas? Our answer to this is that in fact, the system of division of society into four

Varṇas and four Āśramas should be followed by every human society, and the eternal religion as propounded in the Vedas should be respected by all. In societies not organized according to the Varṇāśrama system, therefore, it is very difficult to determine the duty of one individual as against the duty of another. Nevertheless, religion is being held at a discount these days, and the Gītā contains the message of redemption for all humanity, irrespective of caste, creed or nationality. Therefore, it may be held that the nature of an individual is determined, among other things, by the community or society in which he is born, the blood which runs through his veins, the character of the culture and traditions in which he has been brought up from his birth till the attainment of maturity when he may be expected to exercise his own judgment, and, lastly, by the latencies of actions performed by him in his previous births, and it is this nature which determines his natural aptitude for a particular calling for his livelihood. Hence, in a society which is not regulated by the discipline of Varṇāśrama, an individual should take up that work as his duty, which is suited to his nature and circumstances. In other words, he should regard that as his own duty, which in the opinion of a prophet or a great soul is good for his welfare in this world and the next; which he carries on with the best of motives as something obligatory for him; which does not interfere with the duty or interest of another, and which has been regarded as part of the common duties of men in every age and clime. And contrary to this, the duty which is natural to another from the above points of view, and is not natural for him, is another's duty, so far as he is concerned.

The word 'Viguṇaḥ' means lacking in merit. The Kṣatriya's duty is to fight and punish the wicked and so on, and it appears to lack in the virtues of non-violence and peace. Similarly, agriculture and other duties assigned to the Vaiśya also involve destruction of life and many other defects; therefore, compared to the peaceful duties of the Brāhmaṇa, they are inferior or lacking in merit. And the duties of the Śudra are of a lower order even than the duties of the Vaiśya and the Kṣatriya. Besides, the omission of a limb in the performance of one's duties constitutes a deficiency in their performance. In this way though one's own duty may be devoid of merit and may involve some omissions in the course of its performance, it is more conducive to his welfare than the duty of another; this is what is sought to be indicated by adding the adjective 'Viguṇaḥ' to 'Svadharma'.

If one meets with no calamity in the performance of one's duty and succeeds in carrying it on throughout his life, he will without doubt attain either heaven or liberation, whichever is foremost in his thoughts. But if he has to face some danger in the performance of his duty and ignoring the danger sticks to his duty, as the result of which he meets with death, such a death too will bring him blessedness. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by the statement that "even death in the performance of one's own duty brings blessedness." In the Purāṇas and other ancient books of history we come across numerous instances of how those who laid down their valuable life at the altar of duty or suffered mortal pangs for the sake of duty attained blessedness.

Vindicating the duty of a Kṣatriya king Dilīpa offered his own precious life to the lion in exchange for a cow, and achieved his object thereby. In order to be able to fulfil his vow of unfailing hospitality king

Śibi courted death by offering a hawk live flesh chopped from his own body, in exchange for the flesh of a pigeon, and thereby gained the object of his life. In order to vindicate his duty of offering devotion to the Lord, Prahlāda cheerfully underwent various forms of tyranny and persecution threatening his very life, and thereby attained the supreme good. Many more instances of this kind can be cited from the ancient books. The *Mahābhārata says:—*

"Man should never forsake Dharma or duty out of lust, fear or greed; nay, not even for the sake of preserving his life. For Dharma is eternal, and pleasure and pain are fleeting; even so the Jīva or the life principle is eternal, whereas the cause of life is transitory."*

(Svargārohaṇa-Parva V.33)

Therefore, even when faced with death, man should cheerfully embrace it, but should on no account abandon his duty. Therein lies his good from every point of veiw.

Lastly, the verse says that another's duty is fraught with fear. The Lord intends to point out here that even if the performance of another's duty appears to be easy enough, nevertheless it should be looked upon as a source of fear. For instance, if the Śudra (the labourer) and the Vaiśya (the trader) were to adopt the duties of the higher Varṇas, they will incur sin, and will have to suffer tortures in hell, for accepting service and homage from members of the higher Varṇas and depriving them of their rightful means of livelihood. Even so, if the Brāhmaṇa, and the Kṣatriya were to adopt the duties of the two lower Varṇas, they are not only degraded from their own Varṇa but have also to taste the bitter fruit of sin involved in depriving others without any emergency of their rightful means of living. The same things holds good in the case of duties appropriate to an Āśrama, and all other duties. Hence it is not at all necessary for any individual to adopt the duty of another for his own spiritual good. However full of merits the duty of another may appear to be, it is intended for him alone for whom it has been prescribed; for others, it is fraught with fear, and is not likely to lead to blessedness.†

Man's welfare lies only in the performance of his own duty; adoption of another's duty and performance of prohibited acts are detrimental from every point of view. Desiring to know why even after realizing this fact man is dragged against his will, judgment and sense of duty to sinful ways, Arjuna asks the Lord:—

अर्जुन उवाच

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः।
अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः॥ ३६॥

अथ then; **वार्ष्णेय** O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, Kṛṣṇa; **अयम्** this; **पूरुषः** man; **अनिच्छन्** against his will; **अपि** even; **बलात्** by force; **नियोजितः** driven; **इव** as though; **केन** by whom; **प्रयुक्तः** impelled; **पापम्** sin; **चरति** commits.

---

* न जातु कामान्न भयान्न लोभाद्धर्मं त्यजेज्जीवितस्यापि हेतोः। नित्यो धर्मः सुखदुःखे त्वनित्ये जीवो नित्यो हेतुरस्य त्वनित्यः॥

† The 'Code of Manu' also contains a similar statement, which runs as under:—
वरं स्वधर्मो विगुणो न पारक्यः स्वनुष्ठितः। परधर्मेण जीवन् हि सद्यः पतति जातितः॥ (X.97)
"One's own duty, though deficient in merits, is superior to another's duty performed efficiently and well, for a man living by another's duty soon falls from his own social order."

Arjuna said: Now impelled by what, Kṛṣṇa, does this man commit sin even involuntarily, as though driven by force ? (36)

The Lord stated before in verse 60 of Chapter II that even the mind of the wise man is carried away by force by the turbulent senses. In practice also we observe that an intelligent man of judgment and common sense, realizing by direct experience of inferring the bitter fruit of sinful acts, does not willingly lend himself to the commission of a sinful act, knowing that it is wrong to commit sins, and yet like an ailing man taking unwholesome food, he is forcibly driven to such acts. Therefore, by putting the above question, Arjuna seeks to obtain the definite verdict of the Lord as to who forces man to commit sin. Is it God Himself, who lures him to sinful ways and hence he finds himself unable to resist the temptation? or is he compelled by the force of his Prārabdha to indulge in sinful acts ? or is there something else which is responsible for this state of affairs?

In reply to the above question, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम्॥ ३७॥

रजोगुणसमुद्भवः begotten of the element of Rajas; एषः this; कामः desire (itself); क्रोधः (appears as) wrath; एषः this (again); महाशनः (is) ravenous; महापाप्मा (and) grossly wicked; एनम् this; इह in this case; वैरिणम् the enemy; विद्धि know.

Śrī Bhagavān said: It is desire begotten of the element of Rajas, which appears as wrath; nay, it is insatiable and grossly wicked. Know this to be the enemy in this case. (37)

It was shown in verse 35 that the impulses of attraction and repulsion residing in every object of the senses are the two robbers who constantly rob man of his spiritual wealth. In order to show that it is these two impulses which when appearing in a grosser form are known by the names of desire and anger, and that, of these two again desire is the dominant force, for it is a grosser form of attraction and because anger has its root in desire (II.62), that the adjective 'Eṣaḥ' has been used twice in this verse, once after 'Kāmaḥ' and again after 'Krodhaḥ'. Desire springs up from attraction; therefore, the adjective 'Rajoguṇa samudbhavaḥ (begotten of Rajas) should be taken as qualifying 'Kāmaḥ' or desire.

It has already been pointed out that anger ensues from desire. Therefore, with the eradication of desire anger too gets automatically eradicated. That is the reason why in His subsequent dissertation on this subject the Lord speaks of 'desire' alone as the enemy. This should not, however, lead one to imagine that desire alone is the root of all sins, and that anger has nothing to do with them. That is why while introducing the subject the Lord mentions both 'desire' and 'anger' as the enemies of man.

The quality of Rajas fosters attachment, and vice versa. Therefore, both of them have been treated as essentially one (XIV.7). Hence desire originates from both of them.

By speaking of desire as insatiable by nature, it has been shown that it can never

be satiated by enjoyment. Just as clarified butter and fuel, when added to the fire, strengthen it, even so the more we indulge in sense-enjoyments the stronger is our appetite for enjoyment.

Therefore, one should never imagine that he will be able to conquer the enemy in the shape of desire by pursuing the policy of appeasement or bribe and offering the bait of enjoyments to it; he must follow the policy of chastisement with regard to the same.

Desire has been further described in the verse as grossly wicked. The word actually used is 'Mahāpāpmā' literally meaning 'a great sinner'. The intention of this is to show that desire is the root of all evils. Man is forced to commit sin against his will neither by Prārabdha nor by God; it is desire alone which leads man to develop attachment for various objects of enjoyment, and drags him to sinful acts. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of it as grossly wicked.

In the end the Lord asks Arjuna to know desire to be the enemy in this case. The intention of this is to show that one who drags us to a situation which spells either a great disaster or death to us should be treated as an enemy, and should be disposed of as early as possible. This devil of a desire drives man to sinful acts against his will and better judgment and lands him into terrible suffering in the shape of repeated births and deaths and tortures in hell. Hence this should be regarded as the greatest enemy of man on the spiritual path. God being the very embodiment of compassion, and the greatest friend of all created beings, can never lead anyone to sin; while Prārabdha is merely concerned with the enjoyment of the fruits of actions done in a previous life. It does not possess the capacity to lead anyone to sin. The only enemy, therefore, that drives a man to sinful acts is 'desire.'

The preceding verse declared 'desire' to be the root of all evils, and the enemy which compels man to commit sin even against his will. In this connection it may be asked: How does desire compel man to commit sin ? The next three verses show that it covers up the spiritual light of man, and thus depriving him of inner vision throws him into the abyss of sin.

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

यथा as; **धूमेन** by smoke; **वह्नि** a flame; **च** and; **यथा** as; **मलेन** by dirt; **आदर्शः** a mirror; **आव्रियते** is covered; **यथा** (and) as; **उल्बेन** by amnion; **गर्भः** a foetus; **आवृतः** (stands) enclosed; **तथा** so; **तेन** by it; **इदम्** this (Knowledge); **आवृतम्** (stands) veiled.

As a flame is covered by smoke, mirror by dirt, and embryo by the amnion, so is Knowledge covered by it (desire). (38)

The analogy of smoke, dirt and amnion employed in this verse is intended to show that it is desire itself which veils the spiritual light of man by transforming itself into the threefold evils of impurity, distraction and obscuration. Here smoke represents the evil of distraction or restlessness. Just as smoke, though ever unsteady, covers up fire, even so the evil of distraction, which is of the nature of restlessness, shrouds Knowledge. For until the mind has become calm and steady, Knowledge cannot illumine it; it remains dormant and hidden. Again, dirt is the symbol of impurity. Just as when dirt

accumulates on the surface of a mirror, it can no longer reflect any object, even so when the mind gets soiled by impurities in the form of sin, it is no longer able to reveal the true nature of things or point out our duty. That is why with an impure or sinful mind one cannot correctly judge things for oneself. Even so 'amnion' stands for the veil of ignorance that shuts out the light of truth. Just as the embryo remains enclosed on all sides by the amnion, and no part of it is visible, even so our Knowledge is veiled by ignorance. He whose mind is deluded by ignorance gets attached to the delights of sleep, indolence etc., and never exercises his reasoning faculty. It is desire alone which makes the mind restless by fostering the thirst for various forms of enjoyment; it is desire, again, which heaps impurities on the mind by leading a man to sins of various kinds; and it is desire which completely robs man of his reason by exciting his infatuation for sleep, lethargy and indolence. That is why it has been spoken of here as covering up Knowledge in all the three ways.

In the preceding verse Arjuna was asked to know 'desire' as the enemy of man, and the following verse explicitly mentions 'Knowledge' as being covered up by desire, which makes it perfectly clear that the pronoun 'Tena' in this verse stands for 'desire' and 'Idam' for 'Knowledge'. It is therefore that the two words have been interpreted as above.

Making it clear that the word 'Tena' in the preceding verse stands for 'desire', and 'Idam' for 'Knowledge', the Lord now compares desire with fire, and calls it insatiable.

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च॥ ३९॥

च and; कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; अनलेन like fire; दुष्पूरेण insatiable; कामरूपेण disguised as desire; ज्ञानिनः of the wise; नित्यवैरिणा एतेन by this eternal foe; ज्ञानम् Knowledge; आवृतम् (stands) veiled.

And, Arjuna, Knowledge stands covered by this eternal enemy of the wise, known as desire, which is insatiable like fire. (39)

The indeclinable 'Alam' means 'enough'-'no more of it now'— and denotes the idea of satisfaction or satiety; while 'An' is a negative prefix, equivalent to 'not'. Thus 'Anala' ('An' + 'Alam') signifies that which knows no 'Alam' or satiety. Fire will consume any amount of fuel that may be thrown into it, and yet it will not be satiated. This characteristic attribute of fire has won for it the significant appellation of 'Anala'. The word 'Duṣpūra' also means that which is hard to satiate or satisfy. The association of these attributes with 'desire' is intended to show that like ordinary fire, the fire of desire too is insatiable. Even as man goes on enjoying the objects of the world, his appetite for them grows like the fire. It will never be satiated. After passing a long life of intensive enjoyments, King Yayātī is reported to have declared in the end:—

"Desire is never satisfied by the enjoyment of objects of desire; on the other hand, like the fire to which clarified butter is added, it grows stronger through enjoyment of objects."* Śrīmad-Bhāgavata (IX.XIX.14)

The word 'Jñāninaḥ', in this verse,

* न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति। हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्धते॥

refers to Sādhakas possessing discrimination and striving for the attainment of true Knowledge. This enemy in the form of 'desire' does not allow the ideas of discrimination, dispassion and disinterestedness to get firmly rooted in the mind of the Sādhaka, and presents obstacles in the path of his spiritual progress. That is why it has been spoken of as an eternal enemy of the wise. Truly speaking, desire is the enemy of all beings, inasmuch as it drags everyone to the path of degradation. But the man without discrimination, when enjoying objects of enjoyments, erroneously regards it as a friend, due to his attachment for such objects; while men possessed of discrimination, who know the real truth about it, view it as positively mischievous. That is why instead of calling it an 'eternal enemy' of the unwise, it has been spoken of as an 'eternal enemy' of the wise.

The word 'Kāma', forming part of the compound word 'Kāmarūpeṇa' occurring in this verse, denotes the desire for enjoyment of worldly objects, which is looked upon as a vice, nay, the renunciation of which has been advised in the Gītā on various occasions (II.71; VI.24), and which has been spoken of in Chap. XVI as a door to hell (XVI.21). The blessed desire for communion with God, or for the practices of adoration and meditation, or for the performance of Sāttvika forms of action is not covered by this term. For this latter type of desire is conducive to the spiritual well-being of the practicant and being helpful in eradicating the desire for worldly enjoyments can never be hostile to his best interests. Hence the word 'Kāma', wherever it appears in the Gītā, should be interpreted in the sense of craving for union with that which is agreeable and for avoiding the unwelcome, or in the senses of objects of enjoyment. Similarly, the words 'Rāga' and 'Saṅga', meaning attraction or attachment, occurring in verse 34 and else where, should be construed to mean attachment for worldly enjoyments, which is the root of desire, and not in the sense of attraction or love for God.

The word 'Jñānam', in this verse, stands for the light of divine Truth. Speaking of it as "covered by desire", the verse intends to show that just as the foetus though enclosed by the amnion succeeds in bursting open the aminon and emerging out of it, and just as the fire when it blazes up disperses and dissolves the smoke which had hitherto been enveloping it, even so when through the instruction of a saint or the teachings of the scriptures the light of divine Truth gets kindled within the soul; it shines forth piercing the veil of desire which had hitherto screened it. Hence, though covering the light of Truth, the veil of desire is really very feeble and weak when compared to the former.

Speaking thus of the light of Truth as covered by desire, the Lord with a view to revealing the means of killing the latter shows where it resides and how it deludes the embodied soul:—

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम्॥ ४०॥

इन्द्रियाणि the senses; **मनः** the mind; **बुद्धिः** (and) the intellect; **अस्य** its; **अधिष्ठानम्** seat; **उच्यते** is declared (to be); **एषः** it; **एतैः** through these; **ज्ञानम्** the light of Truth; **आवृत्य** screening; **देहिनम्** the embodied soul; **विमोहयति** deludes.

The senses, the mind and the intellect are declared to be its seat; screening the light of Truth through these; it (desire) deludes the embodied soul. (40)

Inasmuch as the mind, the intellect and the senses are not ordinarily under the control of man, 'desire' holds its sway over them. This is what the Lord means when He speaks of the senses, the mind and the intellect as the seat of desire. Therefore, he who seeks his spiritual good should lose no time to drive out this enemy in the form of desire from his mind, intellect and senses, or to suppress and crush it in their very strong hold, failing which, like an enemy entrenched in one's own house, it will destroy his valuable possession in the shape of human existence.

Again, when the verse says that screening the light of Truth through the mind, the intellect and the senses, this enemy in the form of desire deludes the embodied soul, it shows that entering the mind, intellect and senses of the practicant 'desire' obscures his judgment, and leading him to believe that happiness lies in sense-enjoyments, drags him to the path of sin. This brings about his degradation and ruin. Therefore, man should soon awake to this danger and beware of this enemy.

An attempt is being made below to convey to the reader a correct idea of the teaching of this verse by means of a parable:—

There was a monarch, King, Conscient by name. He had a Prime Minister known by the name of Mr. Wise. He had a deputy who worked directly under him. He was called Mr. Fickle. The King, with his Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister resided in his capital, Cordis. The Kingdom was divided into ten districts, each under the control of a Magistrate. Well-bred by nature, King Conscient was a man of ripe judgment and active habits. The people of the kingdom were all happy and prosperous. The state was advancing from day to day. One day a famous swindler, Charmer by name, made his appearance there. Charmer was a great intriguer and a past master in fraudulence; he was a man of exceptionally sweet words, though full of poison in his heart. He charmed everyone, he came in contact with. He appeared in the guise of a trader and approaching the different District Magistrates asked for permission to carry on free trade throughout the kingdom. The magistrates were offered handsome bribes. They felt tempted by his offer, but they could do nothing without the concurrence of the higher authorities. Following the advice of the counterfeit trader, Charmer, they all took him to their immediate officer, Mr. Fickle, the Deputy Prime Minister. He too was offered a tempting bribe by the spurious trader and fell an easy prey to the latter's enticing words. Thereupon Mr. Fickle took him to his chief, Mr. Wise. Though Possessed of great Wisdom, Mr. Wise was after all a weak man; he could not properly weigh the pros and cons of a question and arrive at a definite conclusion. Therefore, as a rule, he was guided by the advice of his deputy, Mr. Fickle, and the ten District Magistrates. These subordinate officers, too for their part, used very often to take undue advantage of the weakness of their chief. Therefore, putting blind faith on the words of Mr. Fickle and the District Magistrates, he too was caught in the trap of the swindler tradesman and agreed to grant him a trade licence, but added in the end that a licence for the whole State could not be granted without the special sanction of the ruler of the State. Finally, at the suggestion of the dissembler, the Prime Minister took him to the king himself. A clever man as he was, the swindler presented to the

king a most seducing picture of the great prosperity he would bring to the entire kingdom. The king also fell a victim to temptation, and therefore granted him permission to carry on unrestricted trade over the whole kingdom and open offices all over the State. Winning over the district officers as well as the two Ministers by a liberal dose of unlawful gratification, Charmer quickly spread his organization over the whole kingdom.

His influence gradually extended over the entire State and without any let or hindrance he began to bleed the people white. The district officers and the two Ministers were given their due, which sealed their lips, and he won over the king as well by allowing him a share of the wealth derived from the undue exploitation of the people. By his deft moves and sweet and unguent words, he slowly and quickly demoralized the king and all his greedy officers, and made them powerless, idle and addicted to vice; while secretly and silently he went on increasing his own strength and tightening his hold over the whole kingdom. Thus robbing the kingdom of all its wealth, he finally captured and imprisoned the king himself.

The parable ends here. The characters of the parable personify the different categories dealt with in the above verse. King Conscient represents the Jīvātmā or the emobodied soul; the Prime Minister, Mr. Wise, is none else than the intellect; the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Fickle, is our familiar mind, and the capital of the kingdom, Cordis, is the heart. The ten Magistrates are the ten organs, the ten districts are the seats of the ten organs, and the arch swindler, Charmer, represents 'desire'. The temptation of the enjoyment of worldly objects is the bride or illegal gratification. Robbing the king means enticing the Jīvātmā to indulge in wordly enjoyments and thus diverting it from the path of true happiness. And incarceration of the king means deluding the embodied soul by veiling his knowledge and forcibly rendering him incapable of realizing the supreme end of human existence.

The intention of all this is to show that this formidable enemy of man in the spiritual path, viz., 'desire' takes hold of the senses, mind and intellect by tempting them with ideas of false happiness to be derived from enjoyment of worldly objects, and covering the knowledge of the Jīvātmā through the instrumentality of the mind, intellect and senses throws it into the dark cell of transmigration. Nay, depriving him of the real wealth in the form of God-realization this arch enemy of man robs him of the inestimable blessings of a human birth.

Describing thus the tyranny of this arch enemy, desire, and showing the places where it remains hidden and carries on its nefarious activities, the Lord now tells Arjuna the device of killing it, and commands him to dispose of it.

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम्॥ ४१॥

तस्मात् therefore; भरतर्षभ O best of the Bharatas, Arjuna; त्वम् you; आदौ first; इन्द्रियाणि (your) senses; नियम्य controlling; ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् obstructing knowledge and wisdom; पाप्मानम् evil; एनम् this (thing); हि surely; प्रजहि kill.

Therefore, Arjuna, you must first control your senses; and then kill this evil thing which obstructs Jñāna (Knowledge of the Absolute or Nirguṇa Brahma) and vijñāna (Knowledge of Sākāra Brahma or manifest Divinity). (41)

The word "Tasmāt" in this verse, indicates cause. By using the words 'Tasmāt' and 'Ādau' with the direction to control the senses the Lord shows that 'desire'; is the root of all evils; it first attacks and occupies the senses, and through the senses it deludes the mind and intellect, and then the embodied soul. Thus the mind, intellect and senses are its stronghold: Therefore, the campaign of destruction of the enemy should start with the reclamation of the senses. When it is dislodged from its citadel, it will be easy to kill this enemy. Therefore, in order to be able to get rid of this enemy one should control the senses first, and thereafter the mind.

Now the question is, how to control the senses ? The senses can be controlled through intensive practice and cultivation of dispassion or freeing the mind of its attraction for worldly enjoyments. These are the two means prescribed for controlling the mind as well (VI.35). Dispassion consists in cultivating aversion to the enjoyments of the world and the next, realizing that the Rājasika type of joy, derived from contact between the senses and the Tāmasika type derived from sleep, indolence and error, are really momentary, perishable and sorrowful. And practice consists in employing the senses in the hearing and chanting of, and reflection on, God's name, virtues, form and activities as well as in disinterested public service, regulating their functions by strength of will according to the injunctions of the scriptures and not allowing them to run wild and act in a wayward fashion. By adopting both these methods, the senses as well as the mind can be brought under control.

The word 'Jñāna' in this verse points to true knowledge of the greatness, glory and mystery of the absolute and formless aspect of God; and the term 'Vijñāna' refers to the true knowledge of formless God with attributes as well as of the transcendent manifestation of God in a Divine form, and His sports, secrets, glories, greatness and virtues. Desire, the arch enemy of man, is ever busy suppressing by its deluding power the craving of the mind for the attainment of 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' referred to above. In other words, it obstructs the practices that one carries on for the attainment of Jñāna and Vijñāna under the impulse of this craving, and does not allow Jñāna and Vijñāna to manifest themselves; that is why 'desire' has been spoken of as the 'obscurer' of Jñāna and Vijñāna. The root 'Naś', from which the word 'Nāśana' has been derived, has two implications—viz., (i) to obscure a thing, and (ii) to destroy it completely by rooting it out. In the present verse the word 'Nāśana' should be understood to convey the first meaning because the preceding verses have already spoken of Knowledge as covered by 'desire'. 'Desire' has no power to destroy or root out Jñāna and Vijñāna; for desire proceeds from ignorance, which is eradicated as soon as Jñāna and Vijñāna make their appearance, and once this ignorance gets eradicated, destruction of Jñāna and Vijñāna becomes out of question.

The preceding verse stated that controlling the senses, the arch enemy in the form of desire should be killed. In this connection it may be asked: So long as the senses, mind and intellect are completely under the sway of desire, and the Jīvātmā too stands deluded by it, how can it be possible to control the senses and kill desire ? Anticipating this question, the Lord points to the true character of the soul, and reminds Arjuna of its supreme power:—

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः॥ ४२॥

इन्द्रियाणि the senses; पराणि (are) greater (than the body); आहुः they say; इन्द्रियेभ्यः than the senses; परम् greater; मनः (is) the mind; मनसः than the mind; तु even; परा greater; बुद्धिः (is) the intellect; यः (and) who; बुद्धेः than the intellect; तु even; परतः (is) far greater; सः (is) he (the Self).

The senses are said to be greater than the body; but greater than the senses is the mind. Greater than the mind is the intellect; and what is greater than the intellect is he (the Self). **(42)**

The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* metaphorically speaks of the body as a coach, and of the senses as horses (I.iii.3, 4). Horses are possessed of life and are superior to the coach and can draw it after them according to their will. Even so the senses alone take the body wherever they like; therefore, they are stronger than the body, and are sensitive too. Again the physical body is perceptible to the eye, but not so the senses; hence they are subtler too than the body.

Besides this, the superiority of the senses over the body, and their being subtler and more powerful are obvious too.

The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* (I.iii.10, 11) says:—"Greater than the senses are their objects; greater than the objects of the senses is the mind; greater than the mind is the intellect; greater than the intellect is the Cosmic Intelligence or Mahat-tattva; greater than the Mahat-tattva is the Unmanifest or Prakṛti (Primordial Matter); and greater than the Unmanifest is Puruṣa (Spirit or Soul). There is nothing superior to and subtler than the Puruṣa. That is the final limit and that is the supreme goal." The Lord, however, makes no mention of the objects of the senses, the 'Mahat-tattva' and the Unmanifest. The reason for their omission is that He has furnished us with a mere outline of the progressive series mentioned in the Upaniṣad; for with a view to urging one to kill 'desire' the superiority of the soul alone requires to be demonstrated, and it is needless to point out the superiority of objects of the senses, Mahat-tattva and the Unmanifest.

The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* speaks of the objects of the senses as superior to the senses, because the objects of the senses, there represent the five Tanmātrās, which are unquestionably subtler than the senses; hence it is but reasonable to declare them as greater than the senses.

In the present verse the Lord speaks of the mind as superior to, and subtler and more powerful than, the senses, and even so of the intellect as superior to, and subtler and more powerful than, the mind. But in Chapter II He says that "the senses even of a wise man who is practising self-control forcibly carry away his mind, turbulent as they are by nature." (II.60), and further tells us that "of the senses moving among sense-objects, the one to which the mind is joined takes away man's discrimination" (II.67). These statements lead one to conclude that the senses are not only more powerful than the mind, but conjoined with the mind they are even more powerful than the intellect. Thus the Lord seems to be contradicting in this verse His earlier statements. But deeper thought would reveal that in reality there is no contradiction between the two types of statements. The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* has made this point amply clear by using the metaphor of the coach. It says that the Self or Soul represents the

owner of the coach, intellect the coachman, the body corresponds to the coach, the mind to the reins, the senses to the horses, and the objects of senses like sound etc., constitute the track on which the coach moves.* Though in the usual course the coachman should be under the control of the owner of the coach, the reins should be under the control of the coachman, and the horses should be under the control of the reins; nevertheless in the case of the Jīvātmā whose coachman in the form of the intellect is devoid of judgment and discrimination, and does not therefore hold the reins in the form of the mind properly, the horses in the form of the senses become unruly and wayward and, forcibly dragging the coach along a wrong path, finally overturn it.† This proves that so long as the soul or Jīvātmā does not exercise control over the intellect, mind and senses, and forgetting its inherent power submits to their control, the senses misleading the mind and intellect succeed in dragging them forcibly behind them along the wrong path. That is to say, the senses first of all win over the mind by tempting it with prospects of enjoyment; then the senses in conjunction with the mind win over the intellect; and they all combine to bring the soul under their thumb. Nevertheless, in reality, the mind is stronger than the senses, the intellect is stronger than the mind, and the soul is the strongest of all. That is why the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* says that he whose coachman in the form of the intellect is wise and discriminating, whose rein in the form of the mind is properly controlled, and whose horses in the form of the senses are well-disciplined,—such a soul, possessed of a pure heart; reaches the supreme state, wherefrom he does not return.‡ The Gītā also speaks of the self which has conquered the mind, intellect and senses as one's friend, and the self which has no control over the mind, intellect and senses as one's enemy (VI.6). Therefore, the uncontrolled senses, though inherently weaker than the mind and the intellect, gain ascendancy. This was the intention of the statements made in Chapter II, whereas in the present verse the true position of the senses in the scheme of things has been brought out. Therefore, there is no real contradiction between the two statements.

The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* speaks of the Mahat-tattva as greater than the intellect, the Unmanifest as greater than the Mahat-tattva (cosmic intelligence), and the Puruṣa as greater even than the Unmanifest, and further declares the Puruṣa to be the end and farthest limit of greatness, beyond which there is nothing.$ In order to bring out the spirit of this Śruti text clearly the word 'Parataḥ' in this verse has been interpreted as meaning "far greater or very much beyond". The soul being the substratum, cause, illuminator and inspirer of everything, and the subtlest, most pervasive,

---

* आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु। बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च॥
इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ।

(*Kaṭhopaniṣad* I.iii.3-4)

† यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्ययुक्तेन मनसा सदा। तस्येन्द्रियाण्यवश्यानि दुष्टाश्वा इव सारथेः॥

(*Ibid.*, I.iii.5)

‡ यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति युक्तेन मनसा सदा। तस्येन्द्रियाणि वश्यानि सदश्वा इव सारथेः॥
यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति समनस्कः सदाशुचिः। स तु तत्पदमाप्नोति यस्मादभूयो न जायते॥

(*Kaṭhopaniṣad* I.iii.6, 8)

$ इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्था ह्यर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः। मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेरात्मा महान् परः॥
महतः परमव्यक्तमव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः। पुरुषान्न परं किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः॥

(*Ibid.*, I.iii.10-11)

most excellent and most powerful of all that exists, it is quite in the fitness of things to speak of the soul as "far greater than the intellect".

Some people contend that 'desire' being the subject of discussion of these verses, and specially as in the next verse the Lord exhorts Arjuna to kill desire, it would be more natural to take the pronoun 'Saḥ' (he) as standing for 'Desire', rather than for the 'Self'. It is no doubt true that extermination of desires is the subject of discussion in the present context, but not its exaltation. The soul possesses the power to kill desire. The present verse has been added to show that once man comes to realize the strength of the soul, he can easily establish full control over the intellect, mind and senses and kill desire. If 'desire' was to be regarded as very much superior to the senses, mind and the intellect, it would be meaningless to ask Arjuna to kill it with the help of the latter. Besides, interpretation of the word 'Saḥ' as 'desire' would run counter to the intention of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*. Hence the word 'Saḥ', in this verse does not mean 'desire', but refers to that supreme Reality, the eternally pure and awakened soul, whose vision as described in Chapter II drives away the very attachment for enjoyment of the sense-objects.

The Lord now asks Arjuna to regard the soul as superior to everything else, as shown in the preceding verse, and to kill the enemy in the form of desire.

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम्॥ ४३॥

एवम् thus; **बुद्धेः** than the intellect; **परम्** (that which is) higher; **बुद्ध्वा** knowing; **आत्मना** by reason; **आत्मानम्** the mind; **संस्तभ्य** subduing; **महाबाहो** O mighty-armed Arjuna; **कामरूपम्** disguised as desire; **दुरासदम्** difficult to overcome; **शत्रुम्** enemy; **जहि** kill.

Thus, Arjuna, knowing that which is higher than the intellect and subduing the mind by reason, kill this enemy in the form of Desire that is hard to overcome. (43)

The light of Truth in man has been covered by ignorance from time without beginning; that is why he has been forgetful of his true self which, though superior to everything else, yet forgetting its inherent power, has submitted to the control of its enemy in the form of desire. Even on hearing the truth from others, as well as from the scriptures, people do not regard the soul as really supreme. If they realize their spiritual nature, desire, which is only another name of passion or attachment, can be very easily destroyed. Therefore, realization of the truth about the self is the principal means of eradicating desire. That is why the Lord asks Arjuna to kill desire, realizing the soul to be far greater even than the intellect. The truth about the soul is deeply mysterious and extremely difficult to understand. It is only the select few, possessed of a subtle intellect, who can understand it, hearing its exposition from the lips of a saint. The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* says: "The self hidden in all beings remains unperceived by them; only man possessed of a subtle vision can realize it with the help of their sharp and subtle intellect."*

The gross body, the senses, the mind,

* एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोत्मा न प्रकाशते। दृश्यते त्वग्र्यया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः॥ *(Kaṭha. I.iii.12)*

the intellect and the Jīva or embodied soul—all these are indicated by the word 'Ātmā'. Of these, control of the senses has already been advised in verse 41. Sense-control implies the control of the body as well, and the soul is the controller itself. Thus there remain only the mind and the intellect; of these the intellect has been declared to be more powerful than the mind, hence it can control the mind. That is the reason why the term 'Ātmā' has been interpreted to mean 'mind' and 'Ātmanā' to mean the 'intellect'.

In Chapter VI, the Lord prescribes two sovereign recipes for the control of the mind, viz., intensive practice and cultivation of dispassion (VI.35). Man naturally entertains either attraction for, or aversion to, each object of the senses. During the contact of the senses with their objects, whenever there arises an occasion for the play of the impulses of attraction and repulsion, he should very carefully try with the help of cool reasoning not to come under their influence; in this way gradually the forces of attraction and repulsion will begin to diminish. 'Dispassion' means inducing in the mind, through reasoning, a distaste for sense-enjoyments by bringing home to it, again and again, the pain and evil involved in them; whereas 'practice' consists in practising self-denial in one's dealings with the world, attempting to concentrate the mind on God during meditation, and repeatedly engaging in efforts to withdraw the mind from sense-enjoyments and fix it on God.

True, the soul possesses infinite strength, and can itself uproot and destroy the enemy of man, desire. In fact, it is the strength derived from the soul that makes everything else powerful and active in the world. But the tragedy of it is that it remains forgetful of its strength. And just as a mighty emperor, forgetting his power through ignorance, may subordinate himself to the will of his petty attendants and servants, who are all-together powerless before him, and tamely submit to their control, even so regarding itself as subordinate to the intellect, mind and senses, the soul blindly acquiesces in all their wayward and unruly actions prompted by desire. That is how desire, hidden in the intellect, mind and senses, tempts the soul with prospects of enjoyment, and keeps it entangled in the world. If realizing its true character and strength the soul asserts itself and exercising restraint over the intellect, mind and senses and disallowing them to act as they like, commands them with authority to drive out desire hidden as a thief, the intellect, mind and senses will not have the courage to disobey its commands, nor can desire remain lurking there even for a moment. It is really surprising that deriving their very existence and activity from the soul, and drawing all their power and strength therefrom, they have suppressed the soul itself and are doing whatever they like. Therefore, it is necessary that knowing itself, and realizing its inherent power, the soul should assert itself and exercise its control over the intellect, mind and senses. It is the intellect, mind and senses which have harboured the thief and are getting out of control. If these are brought under control, desire can be easily killed. This is, really speaking, the only way open to the inactive soul to kill desire. That is why the Lord asks Arjuna to subdue the mind by the intellect in order to kill this enemy.

Desire possesses no inherent power of its own. Finding shelter in the intellect, mind and senses, which drive their strength from the soul, desire has fortified itself there; and so long as the intellect, mind and senses have their own way, it continues through them to draw upon the strength of the soul. That is why desire is considered to be so

powerful; and it is therefore that is has been spoken of as 'hard to overcome'. But this desire is hard to overcome only so long as the soul does not assert itself; and fails to bring the intellect, mind and senses under control.

Arjuna has been addressed in the present verse as 'Mahābāhu' which means one possessed of long and powerful arms. The word is indicative of supreme strength and power. Speaking of desire as 'hard to overcome', the Lord commands Arjuna to kill it; and in the course of this command addresses him as 'Mahābāhu', reminding him of the infinite strength possessed by the soul. In addition to this; the note of address indicates that the command to Arjuna comes from God Himself, the endless repository of infinite and inconceivable divine potency, deriving a small fraction of which the Devas and protectors of the Regions govern and regulate the universe, and getting an infinitesimal part of which an ordinary Jīva can acquire immense power. Therefore, when God Himself regards Arjuna to be capable of destroying desire and commands him to do so, there can be no doubt that he will easily succeed in vanquishing and killing it, however powerful and hard to overcome it may appear to be.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मयोगो
नाम तृतीयोऽध्यायः॥ ३॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the third chapter entitled "Karmayoga, or the Yoga of Action".

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter IV

The title given to this chapter is "Jñāna-Karma-Saṁnyāsa-Yoga." The word 'Jñāna' here is synonymous with Spiritual Wisdom, or Knowledge of Reality; 'Karma' stands for Karmayoga or the Path of Action, and 'Saṁnyāsa' means Sāṅkhyayoga, or the Path of Knowledge, Discrimination and scriptural or book knowledge are also covered by the term 'Jñāna'. While bringing out the secret and truth of His descent on earth, the Lord has discussed in this chapter Karmayoga and Sāṅkhyayoga, the Paths of Action and Knowledge, as well as Knowledge of the truth about the Supreme Spirit, which follows as the consummation of the two paths as well as from an insight into the truth relating to the descent of the Lord. It is, therefore, that this chapter has been given the title of "The Yoga of Knowledge as well as the disciplines of Action and Knowledge."

Title of the Chapter

Stating in verses 1 and 2 how the practice of Karmayoga was taught by father to son in ancient times, the Lord devotes verse 3 to its praise. In verse 4, Arjuna interrogates the Lord about His birth, in reply to which the Lord says in verse 5 that both Arjuna and He had passed through many births, and that He had knowledge of them all but not Arjuna. Revealing in verses 6, 7 and 8 the truth about His descent on earth, as well as the secret, time and occasion of the same; the Lord states in verses 9 and 10 that knowledge of the divine character of His birth and activities and dependence on God lead to God-realization. Verse 11 contains the statement of the Lord that he reciprocates the feelings of those who adore Him. Verse 12 shows that the fruit of the worship of other gods in the shape of worldly enjoyments is speedily attained, in verses 13 and 14 the Lord says that though He is the author of the whole creation, He should be considered to be a non-doer, and further speaks of His actions as being of a transcendent nature, adding that one knowing this is not bound by actions. Citing in verse 15 the example of ancient seekers of liberation the Lord instructs Arjuna to take to the performance of disinterested action. In verses 16 to 18 the Lord promises to reveal the secret of Karma, and declaring the ways of action to be mysterious and their knowledge essential, praises the Yogī who sees inaction in action and action in inaction. Verses 19 to 23 reveal separately the marks and conduct of the sage who actually sees inaction in action and action in inaction, as well as of the Sādhaka who strives to do so. Enumerating in verses 24 to 30, the various forms of sacrifice, e.g., Brahmayajña (a sacrifice in which everything such as the oblation, the ladle, the fire, and the sacrificer himself are looked upon as Brahma), Devayajña (or the worship of gods) and sacrifice in the form of perception of identity etc., all sacrificers are declared as knowers of the truth about sacrifice and sinless; and in verse 31 it is pointed out that the partakers of nectar in the form of the remains of sacrifice attain the eternal Brahma, while for him who does not offer sacrifice neither this world nor the other is happy. In verse 32 all these forms of sacrifice are declared

Summary of the Chapter

as capable of being accomplished through action, while verse 33 asserts that sacrifice through Knowledge is superior to that performed with material things. In verses 34 and 35 Arjuna is asked to approach wise seers for instruction in Truth relation to God and the Knowledge of such Truth is extolled. Verse 36 says that the ocean of sin can be crossed with the help of the raft of Knowledge. In verse 37 Knowledge is spoken of as a fire which reduces all actions to ashes or robs them of their capacity to bear fruit; while verse 38 declares that Knowledge is the best purifier and that the Karmayogī who has attained purity of heart, automatically attains Knowledge. Verse 39 shows that he alone who possesses faith and other virtues is qualified to attain Knowledge, the fruit of which is supreme peace. Denouncing in verse 40 the ignorant, faithless and doubting soul, in verse 41 the Lord gives the assurance that the Karmayogī whose doubts are set at rest is freed from the binding effect of Karma. The chapter is concluded in verse 42 with an exhortation to Arjuna to cut asunder his doubt born of ignorance with the sword of Knowledge, and establishing himself in Karmayoga to take up the fight.

Link of the Discourse

In verses 4 to 29 of the last chapter the Lord showed from various points of view the necessity of performing one's prescribed duties, and in verse 30 He instructed Arjuna to act dedicating all his actions to God and renouncing all desire, attachment and the sense of possession, according to the rules of Karmayoga which emphasizes devotion. Then, in verses 31 to 35 He praised those who followed this doctrine, and denounced those who did not; and emphasizing that one should not come under the sway of attraction and repulsion, stressed once more the performane of one's own duty. Then, on Arjuna's interrogation in verse 36, the Lord pointed out from verse 37 to the end of the chapter that Desire was the root of all evils, which should be rooted out by controlling the senses and the mind by the intellect. But the truth relating to Karmayoga is extremely difficult to understand; therefore, with the intention of throwing more light on the subject, the Lord describes in the first three verses of Chapter IV how Karmayoga was handed down from ancient times, and proving that this Yoga had existed from time without beginning, eulogizes it.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम्।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत्॥ १॥

अहम् I; **इमम्** this; **अव्ययम्** imperishable; **योगम्** Yoga; **विवस्वते** to the Sun-god; **प्रोक्तवान्** taught; **विवस्वान्** the Sun-god; **मनवे** to (his own son) Manu; **प्राह** conveyed; **मनुः** (and) Manu (in his turn); **इक्ष्वाकवे** to (his son) King Ikṣvāku; **अब्रवीत्** imparted.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I taught this immortal Yoga to Vivasvān (Sun-god); Vivasvān conveyed it to Manu (his son); and Manu imparted it to (his son) Ikṣvāku. (1)

Introducing the subject of Karmayoga in verse 39 of Chapter II, the Lord dealt with it in detail till the end of that chapter. Thereafter, in Chapter III, in reply to Arjuna's interrogation He put forward various reasons to show the necessity of engaging in Action, and commanded Arjuna in verse 30 to carry on the fight in accordance with the principle of Karmayoga coupled with devotion. Control of mind being indispensable in the practice

of Karmayoga, He advised Arjuna at the end of the chapter to subdue the mind by the intellect, and thereby kill desire, the inveterate enemy of man.

From all this it becomes clear that mostly the subject of Karmayoga alone in all its various aspects has been discussed till the end of that chapter, and the word 'Imam' in the present verse should naturally refer to the subject under discussion. The word 'Yoga' in this verse should, therefore, be interpreted as referring to Karmayoga.

Besides this, the Sun-god, Manu and other personages mentioned by the Lord, through whom this Yoga has been handed down to posterity are all householders and Karmayogīs; and in verse 15 of this chapter, citing the example of ancient seekers of liberation, the Lord commands Arjuna to perform action, which also seems to strengthen the view that the word 'Yoga' in this verse should be interpreted to mean Karmayoga.

It may be contended here that the words 'Ātmānam Ātmanā Saṁstabhya' in the concluding verse of Chapter III refer to the practice of Samādhi, or absorption of the mind; and inasmuch as the root 'Yuj', from which the word 'Yogam; is derived, also carries the sense of entering into Samādhi—'Yuj Samādhau', it will be more appropriate to interpret the word 'Yogam' as 'entering into Samādhi'.

Our reply to this contention is that in the verse referred to above Arjuna has been asked to kill desire, the great enemy of man, by subduing the mind with the help of the intellect. Cultivation of disinterestedness is the central point of Karmayoga, which can be attained only through the eradication of desire; and it has been declared indispensable for the Karmayogī to conquer and subdue his mind and senses (II.64). Therefore, controlling the mind and senses by the intellect, and eradication of desire,—all these are parts of the discipline of Karmayoga; and as shown above, the intention of the Lord in asking Arjuna to subdue the mind by the intellect and kill desire is to urge him on to take up the practice of Karmayoga. Hence it is but reasonable to interpret the word 'Yoga' as Karmayoga, and not Haṭhayoga or Samādhiyoga.

The intention of the Lord in pointing out that the Yoga referred to here was first taught to the Sun-god and that through him it was handed down to other kings of the solar dynasty is to trace the origin and history of this tradition, as well as to show that of all people on the earth, the Kṣatriyas were the first to adopt and propagate this teaching among them, and that the practice has been in vogue from eternity.

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परन्तप ॥ २ ॥

परन्तप O scorcher of enemies, Arjuna; एवम् thus; परम्पराप्राप्तम् transmitted in succession (from father to son); इमम् (this) Yoga; राजर्षयः royal sages; विदुः knew; सः that; योगः Yoga; महता कालेन long since; इह here, on this earth; नष्टः has disappeared.

Thus transmitted in succession from father to son, Arjuna, this Yoga remained known to the Rājarṣis (royal sages). It has, however, long since disappeared from this earth. (2)

The verse shows that taught by father to son, the practice of Karmayoga remained in vogue among the famous Kṣatriya kings of ancient days for several generations before

His advent. It was, therefore, easy to learn it and know its secret from precept and example in those days, but that was not the case in His time.

He who is both a king and a Ṛṣi (a seer), in other words, a Ruler who also knows the truth of the Vedas is called a 'Rājarṣi'.

The statement that the "Yoga remained known to the Rājarṣis" does not mean that it was unknown to others; such an interpretation would be altogether unwarranted. There is no doubt, however, that royal sages have been in the front rank so far as the knowledge and practice of Karmayoga are concerned. That is why instances are met with in ancient history of men belonging to other orders of society going to the Rājarṣis for instruction in Karmayoga. Therefore, the intention of the Lord in making the above statement appears to be that the practice of Karmayoga having been in vogue at one time among the royal sages and Arjuna also being a member of the royal order, he possessed an inborn qualification to practise it, and would therefore find the practice easy too.

So long as the tradition continued to be handed down from father to son, the practice of Karmayoga remained alive as a spiritual discipline. But even as people gradually developed attachment for worldly enjoyments, the number of Sādhakas qualified to practise Karmayoga began to decline, and this process steadily went on till the holy tradition altogether died out. That is why the Lord says that for a long time past people possessing knowledge of, and an attitude for, the practice of Karmayoga had more or less disappeared from the earth.

Verse 1 of this chapter calls this Yoga as immortal, and the present verse says that it had long since disappeared from the earth. These two statements appear to be mutually contradictory. That which is immortal can never cease to be; and if it gets lost how can it be called immortal ? The solution of this difficulty lies in the fact that all spiritual disciplines intended for God-realization, such as Karmayoga, Jñānayoga, Bhaktiyoga etc., possess an eternal character. That is to say, they never become totally extinct. Since God Himself is eternal, the principles definitely and authoritatively laid down by Him for His own realization can never be perishable; they must be eternal as God Himself. Whenever God's creation manifests itself, these eternal laws to God also make their appearance; and when there is dissolution of creation, they too disappear. But this does not mean that they become totally extinct. In order to show this eternal character of Karmayoga, verse 1 spoke of it as immortal. Therefore, when the present verse says that long since it had disappeared, it should be understood to mean that for a long time great spiritual souls possessed of the knowledge of this Yoga had ceased to appear on earth, so that it had more or less disappeared from the earth; not that it had totally ceased to exist. For the real never ceases to be. According to the Lord's statement in verse 1, this Yoga is manifested by God at the beginning of creation; then during the interval preceding the final dissolution sometimes it disappears, and sometimes it makes its appearance again, due to various causes and circumstances. With the completion of the circle of creation, it dissolves itself into God alongwith the creation. It is in this sense that the Lord speaks of its disappearance; in reality, however, it is immortal and never ceases to be.

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम्॥ ३ ॥

मे My; भक्तः devotee; च and; सखा friend; असि you are; इति therefore; सः एव that very; अयम् this; पुरातनः ancient; योगः Yoga; अद्य today; मया by Me; ते to you; प्रोक्तः has been imparted; हि because; एतत् this; उत्तमम् रहस्यम् (is) a supreme secret.

The same ancient Yoga has this day been imparted to you by Me, because you are My devotee and friend; and also because this is a supreme secret. (3)

The Lord reminds Arjuna of his being a great devotee of long standing and beloved friend as an apology for His unfolding to him a great secret which cannot be divulged to any and every one.

The word 'Saḥ Eva' and 'Purātanaḥ' establish the eternal character of this Yoga; the word 'Te' indicates Arjuna's special qualification to receive the secret; and the word 'Adya' indicates the occasion or circumstances of the revelation of the secret. All this bring out that it was the same Yoga, which the Lord had revealed first to the Sun-god, and which had been handed down from generation to generation from the beginning of creation, that He was going to reaveal that day to Arjuna on the battle-field, finding the latter extremely agitated and perplexed and possessed of a mind surrendered to the Lord, and therefore, well-qualified to receive the secret, so that he might get over his grief and attain the highest good. In addition to the spirit of self-surrender, sincere and anxious questions arising out of the deepest layer of the heart make a man supremely qualified to receive the truth. Arjuna had really established his qualification that day (II.7) as he had never done before. That was why the Lord condescended to reveal the secret to him.

By calling it a "supreme secret" the Lord intends to show that freeing man, as it does, from all forms of misery and bondage, this Yoga is capable of leading Arjuna to an easy realization of God, the embodiment of supreme bliss; that is why it is supreme in character and a closely guarded secret. Besides this the Lord further indicates thereby, that by speaking of Himself as having taught this Yoga to the Sun-god and others and by declaring that He had imparted the same gospel to Arjuna, who was His devotee, the Lord has disclosed to him His divine character, which is a profound secret and should never be divulged to those who do not possess the necessary qualification to receive it.

It may be asked here: "Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested Himself as late as towards the close of the Dvāpara Age, whereas the Sun-god, Manu and Ikṣvāku appeared much earlier, viz., at the dawn of creation; how then, can it be believed that it was Śrī Kṛṣṇa who taught this Yoga to the most ancient Sun-god ?" Therefore, with a view to having this point cleared and in order to obtain an insight into the secret of Divine descent on earth, Arjuna puts the following question:—

अर्जुन उवाच

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः।
कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥ ४ ॥

भवतः Your; जन्म birth; अपरम् (was) later; विवस्वतः of the Sun-god; जन्म birth; परम् (was) earlier; त्वम् you; आदौ at the beginning (of creation); एतत् this (Yoga); प्रोक्तवान् taught; इति this; कथम् how; विजानीयाम् I am to believe.

Arjuna said: You are of recent origin, while the birth of Vivasvān dates back to remote antiquity. How, then, am I to believe that You taught this Yoga at the beginning of creation ? (4)

Arjuna already knew it that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was no ordinary human being, but was Almighty God Himself, the supreme Brahma manifested as a superman; for he had heard the glory of the Lord from the lips of no less a personage than Bhīṣma on the occasion of the great Rājasūya sacrifice performed by King Yudhiṣṭhira *(Maha., Sabhā.,* 38.23, 29), which was corroborated by the statements of various Ṛṣis. That was why in the course of his exile in the forest he once spoke to the Lord about His glories *(Mahā., Vana.,* 12.11-43). Moreover, he had had direct experience of the Lord's supernatural powers demonstrated, for instance, at the time of His killing Śiśupāla and on other occasions of an allied nature. Nevertheless, in order to hear directly from the lips of the Lord the secret of Divine descent, and with a view to having the doubt arising in the mind of the generality of people cleared, Arjuna puts the present question to the Lord. It was well-known to all that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had taken birth only a few years ago as a son of Vasudeva, while the Sun-god had appeared at the beginning of creation from the womb of Aditi. Under the circumstance, without obtaining a proper insight into the secret of it, how could the almost impossible statement be believed that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had taught that Yoga to the Sun-god at the dawn of creation and that the Sun-god handed it down to his posterity? Arjuna, therefore, humbly requested the Lord by this question to bless him by unravelling the secret.

In reply to the above question of Arjuna the Lord, with a view to throwing light on the subject of Divine descent, and revealing His omniscience, says:—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप॥ ५॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; **मे** Mine; **च** and; **तव** thine; **बहूनि** many; **जन्मानि** births; **व्यतीतानि** have gone before; **परन्तप** O chastiser of foes; **तानि** them; **सर्वाणि** all; **त्वम्** you; **न** not; **वेत्थ** know; **अहम्** I; **वेद** know.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, you and I have passed through many births, I remember them all; you do not remember, O chastiser of foes. (5)

In the present verse, the Lord says that Arjuna should not think that Arjuna and He had come into existence only the other day, and that they did not exist before. They are both without beginning and eternal. Apart from His own ever existent and eternal form, He had manifested Himself as the divine Fish, Tortoise, Boar, man-lion, the celestial Dwarf, and in various other forms. His latest manifestation as a son of Vasudeva was no doubt recent; but Arjuna had no idea to how many people He had given spiritual instruction in His previous manifestations of various kinds. Therefore, the statement that He taught this Yoga to the Sun-god should cause no wonder to Arjuna, nor should it be regarded as an impossibility. Arjuna should understand it in the sense that at the

beginning of the existing Kalpa He revealed this Yoga to the Sun-god as Nārāyaṇa, the Prime Person.

When the Lord says: "I remember them all, you do not remember," He indicates His own omniscience, on the one hand, and the finite knowledge of the Jīva, on the other. He means that not being omniscient, Arjuna had no knowledge of the reasons which had prompted Him to assume various divine Forms, the nature of those Forms, the time and occasion of His manifestation, and the sports He enacted in those Forms. Arjuna had lost the memory of his own previous births as well as of all the previous manifestations of the Lord; that was why he puts the above question. But no occurrence of the world remains hidden from the view of the Lord; there is no past or future for Him, everything is present before His eyes. Being omniscient, He knows all Jīvas and everything relating to them (VII.26). Therefore, Arjuna should not entertain the least doubt about the truth of the statement that it was the Lord Himself who taught this Yoga to the Sun-god at the beginning of creation.

Hearing it from the Lord that He had passed through many births one is naturally tempted to enquire how He is born, and what is the difference between His birth and the birth of any other being ? In order to make this clear, the Lord reveals in the next verse the secret of His birth.

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया॥ ६ ॥

अजः unborn; अव्ययात्मा imperishable; अपि though; सन् being; भूतानाम् of (all) beings; ईश्वरः the Lord; अपि though; सन् being; स्वाम् My; प्रकृतिम् Nature; अधिष्ठाय keeping under control; आत्ममायया through My own Yogamāyā (divine potency); सम्भवामि I become manifest.

Though birthless and deathless, and the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My own Yogamāyā (divine potency), keeping My Nature (Prakṛti) under control. (6)

By calling Himself birthless and deathless the Lord means to say that He never takes birth, as ordinary beings do, nor dies; yet He appears taking birth and dying like ordinary beings. Even so, though the Lord of all created beings, He appears just like an ordinary human being. That is to say, people not knowing the secret of Divine descent imagine, at the time of His manifestation as the Divine fish, Tortoise, Boar or in human forms that He has taken birth, and when He disappears from their midst they take Him to have perished. Nay, when He enacts His divine sports in any such forms, they disdain Him looking upon Him as an ordinary mortal (IX.11). Inasmuch as He remains veiled by His Yogamāyā (VII.25) they cannot realize that it is the Almighty God Himself, the Lord of all creation, who is ever pure, awakened and free, who is sporting in that form for the good of the world.

The word 'Prakṛtim' with the adjective 'Svām' stands for primordial Nature, referred to in verses 7 and 8 of Chapter IX, and which has been spoken of again as 'Mahad Brahma' in Chapter XIV of the Gītā. And the word 'Ātmamāyayā' denotes Yogamāyā, the divine potency or transcendental power, referred to in verse 25 of Chapter VII, by which the Lord holds the entire creation and manifests Himself from time to time, assuming various forms, and shrouded by which He

remains incognito. Keeping His primordial Nature under control, the Lord manifests Himself through His Yogamāyā. Primordial Nature brings the world into being, whereas 'Yogamāyā' is the Lord's divine potency, or Transcendental Power.

The Lord states in this verse that He manifests Himself through His own Yogamāyā keeping Prakṛti or Nature, under His control. Thereby He shows the difference between His birth and the birth of ordinary beings of the world. Other beings take birth under the subordination of Prakṛti in various wombs,— good, bad and indifferent,— and undergo pleasurable or painful experiences according to their past Karma; but such is not the case with God. God manifests Himself of His own accord from time to time through His own Yogamāyā keeping Prakṛti under His control, and enacts various divine sports assuming various forms suited to those sports. That birth of the Lord is independent and transcendent in character, and is not brought about by Karma as in the case of the Jīvas.

In the case of the ordinary Jīva birth and death are determined by his Karma, and not by his will. He has to remain pent up in the womb of his mother and lead a miserable existence there. During birth he has to undergo the ordeal of passing through the vagina of his mother; thereafter his body grows through the efflux of time and perishes in due course, when it is said the Jīva is dead. Compelled by his Karma, he again takes birth in another form; and the process goes on repeating till he is liberated from the bondage of births and deaths. But appearance and disappearance of the Lord stand on a different footing altogether, and are wholly dependent on God's will. God can manifest Himself any time He likes, anywhere He likes and in any form He likes, and can similarly disappear at His own sweet will. In a moment He can expand Himself and assume a huge proportion, and the very next moment He can reduce Himself to a very small size and can change His form at will. The reason for this is that He is not ruled by Prakṛti, but Prakṛti has to follow His will. Therefore, just as changes in the form of the Lord, as described in Chapter XI,— when He first showed Arjuna His Universal Form, then His divine four-armed Form, and lastly His human form,— do not mean birth and death, even so the Lord's manifestation in any form whatsoever, and His concealing that form do not indicate birth and death, but constitute only different aspects of His eternal Sport.

Some people presume that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's birth must have taken place from the womb of Devakī following the same laws of birth as operate in the case of other beings. But this presumption has no foundation in fact. A study of that portion of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* which deals with the birth of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa will reveal the fallacy of this presumption. It is stated therein that mother Devakī beheld the Lord manifested before her in His four-armed Divine Form, holding the conch, the discus, the club and the lotus in His four hands, and offered her prayers to the Lord. Later on at the request of the mother, the Lord assumed a baby's form.* Thus it would appear that

* उपसंहर विश्वात्मन्नदो रूपमलौकिकम्।
शङ्खचक्रगदापद्मश्रिया जुष्टं चतुर्भुजम्॥

"O soul of the universe, pray withdraw this superhuman—divine form consisting of four arms holding the conch, discus, club and lotus." *(Śrīmad Bhāgavata X.iii.30)*

इत्युक्त्वाऽऽसीद्धरिस्तूष्णीं भगवानात्ममायया।

"Having thus spoken, the glorious Hari became quiet, and His own supreme power and will instantly assumed the form of a human child while his parents looked on." *(Ibid., X.iii.46)*

the birth of the Lord did not take place from the womb of mother Devakī, but He revealed Himself of His own accord. In order to enact the sport of birth, however, it was shown to the world as if He remained for ten months in the womb of the mother, and was born at the proper time.

On hearing the above secret of the Lord's manifestation from the lips of the Lord Himself, one is naturally inclined to ask when and with what motive does the Lord manifest Himself as stated above. In the next two verses, therefore, the Lord reveals the occasion, ground and object of His manifestation:—

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्॥ ७॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; यदा यदा whenever; धर्मस्य of virtue; ग्लानि: decline; भवति there is; अधर्मस्य (and) of evil; अभ्युत्थानम् (there is) rise; तदा then; हि indeed; अहम् I; आत्मानम् Myself; सृजामि body forth.

Arjuna, whenever righteousness is on the decline, and unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then I body Myself forth. (7)

There is no fixed period of time for the manifestation of God; and it cannot be positively asserted that He will manifest Himself in a particular Yuga or age, in a particular year and month, and on a particular date. Nor is there any rule to show how many times, and in how many forms, will the Lord appear in a particular Yuga. In order to bring out this fact clearly the word 'Yadā' has been used twice in this verse. The intention is to show that the Lord manifests Himself whenever He feels it necessary to do so in view of the decline of virtue and preponderance of vice.

God alone knows what is that decline of virtue and preponderance of vice like, which compels Him to manifest Himself. It is not possible for man to judge it correctly. But by way of conjecture it may be stated that when as a result of the tyranny and injustice of the strong and wicked over saintly and virtuous souls, devotees of God and other innocent, weak and helpless people, the barometer of virtue and morality in society falls very low, and that of vice and immorality rises high, it will mean decline of virtue and preponderance of vice. For instance, during the Satyayuga, when Hiraṇyakaśipu ruled over the world, vice and immorality prevailed; innocent men were tyrannized over and people were forced to abandon all forms of spiritual practice like meditation, Japa, austerities, worship, recital of sacred texts, performance of sacrifices, charity etc. The gods were cudgelled out of their abodes in heaven and were driven from pillar to post like flocks of sheep. A devotee like Prahlāda was subjected to various forms of persecution. That was the moment when God suddenly appeared in the form of a man-lion and rescuing Prahlāda from the grip of his tyrannical father, established virtue and righteousness on a solid foundation. Similar conditions prevailed on the occasion of other manifestations of the Lord as well.

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे॥ ८॥

साधूनाम् of the good; परित्राणाय for the protection; दुष्कृताम् of evil-doers; विनाशाय for the extirpation of; च and; धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय for firmly establishing virtue; युगे युगे from age to age; सम्भवामि am born.

For the protection of the virtuous, for the extirpation of evil-doers, and for establishing Dharma (righteousness) on a firm footing, I am born from age to age. (8)

The word 'Sādhunām' in this verse stands for those who observe the rules of non-violence, truth, non-thieving, continence, etc., which have a universal application, and duly perform duties pertaining to their order in society and stage in life, such as the performance of sacrifices, charity and austerities, teaching and governance of the people, etc., who are naturally disposed to do good to others, who are the infinite repositories of all forms of virtue, and the very embodiments of right conduct and are by nature devotees of God, given to the devout practices of hearing, chanting and remembrance of God's name; form, virtues, glory and sports, etc. And "protection of the virtuous" means deliverance of such persons from the terrible wrongs of wicked and evil-minded men, bestowing on them the highest spiritual state after their death and conferring on them the highest good by wiping out the entire stock of their accumulated sins through His very sight etc., and enacting divine sports so that by hearing and chanting, and reflecting and meditating on them people may find an easy way to redemption.

The word 'Duṣkṛtām' stands for the antithesis of a 'Sādhu' as described above. It refers to wicked men possessing a demoniac disposition, who persecute innocent and virtuous men and devotees of God, are repositories of vices like lying, hypocrisy, theft, adultery etc., who are unbelievers by nature, and are engaged in amassing wealth by objectionable methods, and with whom it has become a habit to wage war against God and the Vedas and other scriptures. And "destruction of evil-doers" means chastising such wicked and evil-minded people with a view to freeing them from the clutches of evil and sin, and depriving them of their body by means of war or any other expedient, directly or through the instrumentality of other beings.

Here it may be asked: Why does God, who is extremely compassionate, find it necessary to punish and chastise these wicked men instead of reforming their character through persuasion and remonstrance? Our answer to this question is that the very chastisement by the Lord, and death at His hands, which means depriving them of their demoniac body, is an act of compassion on the part of the Lord; for the Lord only wipes out their sins and purifies them through such punishment and death. It should never be imagined that punishment by God involves the least relaxation of His compassion. When an abscess is formed in a particular limb of a child, its parents attempt, in the first instance, to suppress it by the use of some medicine; but when it is found that no medicine will avail in its case and that the least delay will cause the poison to spread to other parts as well, they immediately get the abscess opened and will not hesitate even to have the limb amputated, if necessary, in the interests of the other limbs. Even so the Lord tries to reform the wicked, first by persuasion and instruction, according to the policy of conciliation, as He did in the case of Duryodhana, and then even by threat of punishment. But when He finds that such instruction and threat do not avail, and their wickedness is gradually

assuming proportions, He, in the last resort, takes recourse to punishment, or even causes them to be killed, as a method of expiation of their sins. Those among the wicked, whose stock of past Karma has been good, but whose conduct in the current life has become vicious due to some special cause or association with evil, He liberates by inflicting the penalty of death by His own hands. All these actions of the Lord are nothing but expressions of His extreme compassion.

The Lord awakens in the minds of the people faith in and reverence for the Vedas and other scriptures, the other world, saints and God by carrying out the injunctions of the scriptures in His own personal life, and demonstrating the glory of righteousness by the use of His inspiring and powerful words and messages, and other such means, and developing among the people a natural love and reverence for virtues and right conduct, makes them strongly cling to them. All these items of activity are included in the process of establishing Dharma.

It is not necessary that God should manifest Himself only when there is an occasion for discharging all the three functions, *viz.*, protection of the virtuous, destruction of evil-doers and establishment of Dharma together. He can manifest Himself at His discretion in order to carry out any two objects, or even one of these objects.

It is true God is powerful enough to accomplish anything He likes by His mere will, without manifesting Himself; in fact He does so. But when He manifests Himself in a visible form, He does so as an act of special grace, with a view to affording people the rare opportunity of liberating themselves through His sight and touch as well as through direct exchange of words with Him, and also with a view to conferring on His loving devotees the proud privilege of participation in and enjoyment of His Divine Sports. People can easily cross the ocean of transmigration through constant remembrance of His enchanting form revealed in such manifestations, and through the hearing and chanting of and meditation on His Name, virtues, glory, exalted nature and the Divine Sports enacted by Him. This process of wholesale liberation of souls in bondage cannot be set in motion unless the Lord appears in person amidst us.

When the Lord says, "I am born from age to age," He thereby shows that in every age, whenever the decline of righteousness goes beyond limits, He manifests Himself again and again, or as many times as circumstances require. There is no such rule that He comes down only once in a particular age.

Revealing thus the occasion, ground and object of His manifestation, the Lord now shows in the next verse the fruit of real knowledge of the divine character of His birth and activities:—

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन॥ ९॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; मे My; जन्म birth; च and; कर्म action; दिव्यम् (is) divine; एवम् so; यः who; तत्त्वतः in reality; वेत्ति knows; सः he; देहम् (his) body; त्यक्त्वा on leaving; पुनः again; जन्म birth; न not; एति attains; माम् to Me; एति comes.

Arjuna, My birth and activities are divine. He who knows this in reality is not reborn on leaving his body, but comes to Me. (9)

The All-powerful God, the Supreme Brahma, is, truly speaking, wholly beyond birth and death. The process of His birth is not the same as in the case of the Jīva. He simply enacts the sport of birth in order to draw and attract the minds of His devotees through His divine sports and to delight them by His sight, touch and speech, as an act of special grace, to spread His fame throughout the world and thereby wipe out the sins of the people through the hearing, chanting and remembrance of the same, and lastly, to establish righteousness in the world through the extirpation of evil- doers. There is no taint of evil in that supernatural birth of the Lord. For the good of the world, He assumes a celestial, human or sub-human form and manifests Himself before the people. That Form of the Lord is not made of any material stuff: therefore, it is divine, spiritual, effulgent, pure and transcendent. The Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti and latencies of Karma do not constitute the cause of His birth. He does not take birth as one subject to the control of Māyā, but appears in a celestial, human or subhuman form through His own divine potency, keeping Nature under His control, to confer His grace on the Jīvas of the world. Realizing this truth, that is to say, reposing full faith in it, without entertaining the least doubt or mental reservation with regard to the same, and viewing the Lord manifested in a human form, not as an ordinary mortal, but as Almighty God Himself, the Lord of the entire creation, the Knower of all hearts, the Supreme Brahma, and the very embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss,— this is what is meant by knowing in reality the divine character of the Lord's birth. The same truth has been explained in verse 6 of this chapter. Verses 24 and 25 of Chapter VII, and verses 11 and 12 of Chapter IX denounce those who not knowing this truth treat the Lord as an ordinary human being; while verse 3 of Chapter X praises those who know this truth in reality.

He who thus comes to know in reality the divine character of the Lord's birth will find even a moment's separation from the Lord unbearable. Because of his supreme reverence and exclusive love for the Lord he will be found completely merged in His thought.

The Lord has no personal interest in whatever He does by way of creating the universe, or carrying on his sports connected with a particular manifestation; it is simply in order to shower His grace on humanity that He carries on multifarious activities in course of His various manifestations (III.22,23). Though He carries on all activities through His own Prakṛti, He is essentially a non-doer and is never bound by those actions, inasmuch as He does not claim their authorship, nor does He crave for their fruit (IV.13,14). Whatever He does, He does for the good of the world (IV.8). Every activity of His, has the good of the people behind it. Though the sole and undisputed Lord and ruler of countless millions of universes, He treats all beings with compassion shorn of egoism and an impartiality full of love (IX.29). Howsoever man approaches Him, even so does He seek him (IV.11); He brings full security and personally attends to the needs of His devotees (IX.22), confers divine wisdom on them (X.10,11), and assumes the role of a helmsman to take those who have boarded the bark of Devotion speedily across the ocean of birth and death (XII.7). In this way, all activities of the Lord are totally free from evils like attachment, egoism and desire, and are absolutely pure and stainless. They are carried on only for the good of the people and for the spread of morality, righteousness and pure love, devotion etc., in the world.

Though engaged in all these activities, the Lord has really no connection with them; He remains beyond and above them, essentially a non-doer. Realizing this truth, that is to say, reposing full faith in it without entertaining any doubt or mental reservation with regard to the same, is what is meant by knowing in reality the divine character of the activities of the Lord. The activities of one who comes to know this in reality become pure and transcendent in character: that is to say, he too begins to treat all beings with compassion, impartiality; righteousness, propriety, humility and disinterested love.

Here it may be asked: Does one attain God by realizing the divine character of the birth of the Lord and His activities both, or even one of them to the exclusion of the other? Our answer to this is that the knowledge of the divine character of even one of them is sufficient to bring about the realization of God (IV.14; X.3). Under such circumstances realization of God becomes much easier for him who has come to know in reality the divine nature of both. The Lord says that he who knows the above truth in reality is not reborn on leaving his body. What becomes of him then ? As an answer to this probable query, the Lord says, "He attains Me". And it is an indisputable fact that he who reaches His abode cannot be born again (VIII.16).

The statement of the Lord that he who comes to know the above truth in reality goes to Him on leaving his body, should not lead one to imagine that he realizes God only after death, and not while living. As a matter of fact he directly perceives God the moment he realizes this truth fully. The point which is sought to be stressed here is that after death he does not return to this mortal world, but goes to the Lord's supreme Abode.

The Lord proceeds in the next verse to show that the fruit of realizing the divine nature of His birth and activities, as described above, has been attained from time immemorial:—

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः।
बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः॥ १०॥

वीतरागभयक्रोधाः completely rid of passion, fear and anger; मन्मयाः (wholly) absorbed in Me; माम् on Me; उपाश्रिताः depending; बहवः many; ज्ञानतपसा by the penance of (the aforesaid) Knowledge; पूताः purified; मद्भावम् My being; आगताः (have) entered into.

Completely rid of passion, fear and anger, wholly absorbed in Me, depending on Me, and purified by the penance of wisdom; many have become one with Me even in the past. (10)

The word 'Rāga' stands for attachment, and the feeling of uneasiness produced in the mind at the possibility of an impending danger or calamity is known as 'fear'. And the excitement man feels against one who has done him an injury, or transgressed the bounds of propriety, or acted against his will is termed 'anger'. They who are absolutely free from all these three modifications of the mind are referred to by the compound word 'Vītarāgabhayakrodhāḥ'. He who has come to know in reality the divine character of the birth and activities of God, develops exclusive love for God; hence he will not feel even the least attachment for anything

in the world except God. Having realized the truth about God, he begins to feel directly everywhere the existence of God; and as he finds God in every being and every object, he becomes for ever free of fear. Whatever treatment he may receive from others, he regards as ordained by the will of God, and looks upon all incidents of the world as a part of the divine play; therefore, the morbid feeling of anger can never arise in his mind on any account. Thus through the grace of God, devotees who have realized the divine character of the Lord's birth and activities are freed for ever from ordinary human imperfections and weaknesses; this is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the adjective 'Vītarāgabhayakrodhāḥ' in this verse.

The devotees of God who on account of their exclusive love for God, see God and God alone everywhere are referred to here by the word 'Manmayāḥ'. The use of this adjective indicates that the devotee who succeeds in realizing God through knowledge of the truth of His divine birth and activities, naturally develops exclusive love for God. Therefore, his mind gets totally merged in God, and he sees God everywhere (VI.30; VII.18-19).

The word 'Māmupāśritāḥ' stands for those who have taken refuge in God, who depend on God for everything, and remain ever content in God, and having no duty to perform for themselves, act in the spirit of rendering service to God to carry out His behest and regarding everything as belonging to him. The use of this adjective in the verse indicates that the devotees who have realized God have their self fully surrendered to God, and depend on God for everything; and all the marks of the devotee who has in reality surrendered himself to God find their fullest development in him.

The subject of discussion in these verses is Devotion, and not Knowledge, and the preceding verse spoke of true knowledge about the divine character of the birth and activities of God as leading to God-realization. The present verse is a corroboration of the statement made in the preceding verse. Therefore, the word 'Jñāna' forming part of the compound word 'Jñānatapasā' has been interpreted as meaning knowledge of the divine character of the birth and activities of God, and not the knowledge of Self. The penance of this knowledge develops exclusive love for God, which wipes out all the sins and afflictions of the devotee and frees his mind from all imperfections and vices and his activities become as divine as that of God. He never loses sight of God, who is always present before his eyes. This is what is meant by the statement that such devotees, being purified by the penance of wisdom, become one with God.

With reference to the statement made in the preceding verses that the devotee who comes to know in reality the divine character of the birth and activities of the Lord, attains Him. The question arises as to how and in what form do they attain Him. In answer to this the Lord says:—

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः॥ ११॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; **ये** who; **माम्** Me; **यथा** however, in whatever way; **प्रपद्यन्ते** seek; **अहम्** I; **तान्** them; **तथा** so; **एव** even; **भजामि** approach; **मनुष्याः** (all) men; **सर्वशः** in every way; **मम** My; **वर्त्म** path; **अनुवर्तन्ते** follow.

Arjuna, howsoever men seek Me; even so do I approach them; for all men follow My path in every way. (11)

In this verse the Lord shows that His devotees adore Him in various ways. They attribute different forms to Him according to their own conception and adore and think of Him in that form alone. Therefore, God too reveals Himself before a devotee in the same form in which he has been thinking of Him. Before a worshipper of the divine form of Viṣṇu, He reveals Himself in the form of Viṣṇu; before a worshipper of Śrī Rāma, He reveals Himself as Śrī Rāma; before an adorer of Śrī Kṛṣṇa He appears as Śrī Kṛṣṇa; before a worshipper of Śiva, He appears as Śiva; before the worshippers of the Divine Mother He takes the form of the Divine Mother, and is attained by the worshipper of His formless, all-pervading aspect in that very aspect. Similarly, appearing before the worshipper of His other forms such as the divine Fish, Tortoise, Man-lion, Dwarf etc., in those very forms, He redeems them from bondage. Besides. howsoever and with whatever sentiment devotees seek Him, He also approaches them in the same way and reciprocates their sentiment. The Lord thinks of the devotee who thinks of Him; He pines for the devotee who pines for Him; He cannot bear separation from the devotee who cannot bear separation from Him; He offers His all to the devotee who offers his all to Him. Those who treat Him as a friend like the cowherd boys of Vṛndāvana, He also treats them as friends. Those who love Him as a child as Nanda and Yaśodā did, He approaches as a child and thereby redeems them. Even so, those who like Rukmiṇī worship Him as their husband, He behaves with them as a husband; those who like Hanumān serve Him as the Lord and Master, He accepts their services as the Lord and Master, and those who like the Gopīs adore Him as a lover, He meets them as a lover and redeems them by allowing them to participate in, and enjoy His divine sports.

In the second half of the verse the Lord says that all men follow His path in every way. Thereby He shows that if He returns the love and good will of His devotees, the generality of men too who follow His ways will likewise learn to love one another disinterestedly and behave with one another in a friendly and proper way. He further indicates that it is incumbent on Him to do so in order to establish the above practice in the world, and thus fulfil the object of His descent on earth, viz., the promotion and establishment of virtue and righteousness (IV.7-8).

If such is the case, why do men worship the other gods instead of worshipping the supreme Lord ? In answer to this, the Lord says:—

काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः।
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा॥ १२॥

इह मानुषे लोके in this world of human beings; कर्मणाम् of (their) activities; सिद्धिम् the fruition; काङ्क्षन्तः seeking; देवताः the gods; यजन्ते worship, offer sacrifice to; हि for; कर्मजा born of actions; सिद्धिः success; क्षिप्रम् quickly; भवति comes, is attained.

In this world of human beings; men seeking the fruition of their activities worship the gods; for success born of actions follows quickly. (12)

Men alone possess the qualification to worship gods like Indra through the performance of sacrifices and other forms of worship; other beings do not possess this qualification. This is indicated by the word 'Loke' qualified by the adjectives 'Iha' and 'Mānuṣe'.

People who are attached to worldly enjoyments seek the fruition of their activities in the form of acquiring worldly possessions such as a wife, progeny, wealth, a house to live in, honour and fame etc.; and since their judgment is clouded by cravings of various kinds, they take to the worship of celestials like Indra for the fulfilment of their desires (VII.20,21,22; IX.23,24) and do not worship God Himself; for the worshippers of those gods attain the fruits of their actions quickly. Ordinarily it is not in the nature of the celestials to see whether the bestowal of a particular gift on a worshipper will be conducive to his interest or not; they are only concerned with the due completion of a ritual. On the ritual being completed in all its details, they invariably grant its ordained fruit, if it is, within their power to grant it. That is, however, not the case with God. His dispensations with regard to a devotee are always guided by considerations of his real interest. If the devotee worships Him even with an interested motive, He fulfils only those desires of the devotee whose satisfaction will turn his face from worldly enjoyments and accentuate his love for, and faith in, God. Therefore, worldly-minded men do not see quick results following the practice of devotion to God, and hence these dull-witted men take to the worship of the celestials in order to obtain quick results of their actions.

Verse 9 proclaimed God-realization to be the fruit of knowledge of the divine character of the birth and activities of God. Previous to that the divine character of God's birth had been adequately explained, but the divine character of His activities had nowhere been clearly brought out. Therefore, the next two verses deal with this subject revealing that his actions such as the creation of the world etc., are marked by absence of the sense of doership, partiality, and desire.

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः।
तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम्॥ १३॥

चातुर्वर्ण्यम् the four orders of society (the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra); गुणकर्मविभागशः classifying them according to the mode of Prakṛti predominant in each and apportioning corresponding duties to them; मया by Me; सृष्टम् were created; तस्य of this creation; कर्तारम् the author; अपि in spite of being; माम् Me; अव्ययम् the imperishable Lord; अकर्तारम् a non-doer; विद्धि know.

The four orders of society (the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra) were created by Me classifying them according to the mode of Prakṛti predominant in each and apportioning corresponding duties to them; though the author of this creation, know Me, the immortal Lord, to be a non-doer. (13)

The relative proportion of the qualities of Sattva (harmony), Rajas (motion) and Tamas (inertia) constituting the nature of an individual is determined by the type of actions performed by him in course of his previous births from time without beginning, and which have not yet borne fruit. At the beginning of creation, when God creates

men, He determines their birth according to these qualities and latencies of their Karmas. That is to say, those in whom the quality of Sattva predominates are ordained to be born as Brāhmaṇas; those in whom the quality of Rajas with an admixture of Sattva predominates are caused to be born as Kṣatriyas; those in whom Rajas with an admixture of Tamas preponderates are made to take birth as Vaiśyas; and finally those in whom Tamas with an admixture of Rajas preponderates are caused to be born among the Śūdras. It is God, again, who lays down the respective duties of each of the four orders so created according to their natural inclinations. That is why the scriptures enjoin that the Brāhmaṇa should practise control of the mind and senses, the Kṣatriya should exhibit valour and energy, the Vaiśya should engage in agriculture, rearing of cows etc., while the Śūdra should devote himself to physical service (XVIII.41—44). In this way the four orders of society are created by God classifying them according to the qualities predominant in each and apportioning corresponding duties to them. The social organization which is thus set up continues from age to age. So long as purity of blood is maintained, so long as procreation takes place through the union of parents of the same order and there is no admixture of blood due to the union of heterogenous elements, the system of classification of society as set forth above goes on unimpaired. Even when there is confusion, the system continues to work, partially though.

The subject of discussing here is action and worship and man alone is qualified to perform them. Hence the principle enunciated in this verse refers only to man. But the principal itself has a universal application and it should therefore be understood that other beings too such as gods, manes and creatures of the sub-human species as well are created by God according to the qualities and actions of the Jīvas. Therefore, the statement that "God created the four orders of society, classifying them according to their qualities and apportioning corresponding duties to them" is intended to show that the Lord does not evince least partiality or prejudice in creating the world and other activities.

It may be asked here: What should be the principle of dividing the society into Varṇas or castes birth or conduct ? Our answer to this question is that birth and conduct both being contributory factors determining the caste of an individual, a man becomes fully entitled to the membership of a particular caste only when he is born in that caste and also follows the course of conduct prescribed for that caste. But the ruling factor is birth; hence birth should be recognized as the basis of classifying the Varṇas. It the parents of an individual belong to the same caste and no confusion of castes in any form is allowed to take place in the matter of birth, no confusion of duties will easily ensue in ordinary circumstances. But if on account of undesirable association, impure diet and a wrong type of education and culture etc., there is some deviation in certain cases from the course of conduct laid down for the various castes, the social order can be maintained if caste is determined by birth. Strict adherence to the course of conduct prescribed for one's caste, however, is nonetheless essential. If the duties allotted to a particular caste are entirely given up by that caste, the maintenance of the social order becomes most difficult. And therefore, birth should be the guiding principle in determining one's vocation in life and conjugal relations, whereas conduct should be recognized as the principal factor in determining one's spiritual growth. For instance, if he who is a Brāhmaṇa by birth

Men alone possess the qualification to worship gods like Indra through the performance of sacrifices and other forms of worship; other beings do not possess this qualification. This is indicated by the word 'Loke' qualified by the adjectives 'Iha' and 'Mānuṣe'.

People who are attached to worldly enjoyments seek the fruition of their activities in the form of acquiring worldly possessions such as a wife, progeny, wealth, a house to live in, honour and fame etc.; and since their judgment is clouded by cravings of various kinds, they take to the worship of celestials like Indra for the fulfilment of their desires (VII.20,21,22; IX.23,24) and do not worship God Himself; for the worshippers of those gods attain the fruits of their actions quickly. Ordinarily it is not in the nature of the celestials to see whether the bestowal of a particular gift on a worshipper will be conducive to his interest or not; they are only concerned with the due completion of a ritual. On the ritual being completed in all its details, they invariably grant its ordained fruit, if it is, within their power to grant it. That is, however, not the case with God. His dispensations with regard to a devotee are always guided by considerations of his real interest. If the devotee worships Him even with an interested motive, He fulfils only those desires of the devotee whose satisfaction will turn his face from worldly enjoyments and accentuate his love for, and faith in, God. Therefore, worldly-minded men do not see quick results following the practice of devotion to God, and hence these dull-witted men take to the worship of the celestials in order to obtain quick results of their actions.

Verse 9 proclaimed God-realization to be the fruit of knowledge of the divine character of the birth and activities of God. Previous to that the divine character of God's birth had been adequately explained, but the divine character of His activities had nowhere been clearly brought out. Therefore, the next two verses deal with this subject revealing that his actions such as the creation of the world etc., are marked by absence of the sense of doership, partiality, and desire.

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः।
तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम्॥ १३॥

चातुर्वर्ण्यम् the four orders of society (the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra); गुणकर्मविभागशः classifying them according to the mode of Prakṛti predominant in each and apportioning corresponding duties to them; मया by Me; सृष्टम् were created; तस्य of this creation; कर्तारम् the author; अपि in spite of being; माम् Me; अव्ययम् the imperishable Lord; अकर्तारम् a non-doer; विद्धि know.

The four orders of society (the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra) were created by Me classifying them according to the mode of Prakṛti predominant in each and apportioning corresponding duties to them; though the author of this creation, know Me, the immortal Lord, to be a non-doer. (13)

The relative proportion of the qualities of Sattva (harmony), Rajas (motion) and Tamas (inertia) constituting the nature of an individual is determined by the type of actions performed by him in course of his previous births from time without beginning, and which have not yet borne fruit. At the beginning of creation, when God creates

men, He determines their birth according to these qualities and latencies of their Karmas. That is to say, those in whom the quality of Sattva predominates are ordained to be born as Brāhmaṇas; those in whom the quality of Rajas with an admixture of Sattva predominates are caused to be born as Kṣatriyas; those in whom Rajas with an admixture of Tamas preponderates are made to take birth as Vaiśyas; and finally those in whom Tamas with an admixture of Rajas preponderates are caused to be born among the Śūdras. It is God, again, who lays down the respective duties of each of the four orders so created according to their natural inclinations. That is why the scriptures enjoin that the Brāhmaṇa should practise control of the mind and senses, the Kṣatriya should exhibit valour and energy, the Vaiśya should engage in agriculture, rearing of cows etc., while the Śūdra should devote himself to physical service (XVIII.41—44). In this way the four orders of society are created by God classifying them according to the qualities predominant in each and apportioning corresponding duties to them. The social organization which is thus set up continues from age to age. So long as purity of blood is maintained, so long as procreation takes place through the union of parents of the same order and there is no admixture of blood due to the union of heterogenous elements, the system of classification of society as set forth above goes on unimpaired. Even when there is confusion, the system continues to work, partially though.

The subject of discussing here is action and worship and man alone is qualified to perform them. Hence the principle enunciated in this verse refers only to man. But the principal itself has a universal application and it should therefore be understood that other beings too such as gods, manes and creatures of the sub-human species as well are created by God according to the qualities and actions of the Jīvas. Therefore, the statement that "God created the four orders of society, classifying them according to their qualities and apportioning corresponding duties to them" is intended to show that the Lord does not evince least partiality or prejudice in creating the world and other activities.

It may be asked here: What should be the principle of dividing the society into Varṇas or castes birth or conduct ? Our answer to this question is that birth and conduct both being contributory factors determining the caste of an individual, a man becomes fully entitled to the membership of a particular caste only when he is born in that caste and also follows the course of conduct prescribed for that caste. But the ruling factor is birth; hence birth should be recognized as the basis of classifying the Varṇas. It the parents of an individual belong to the same caste and no confusion of castes in any form is allowed to take place in the matter of birth, no confusion of duties will easily ensue in ordinary circumstances. But if on account of undesirable association, impure diet and a wrong type of education and culture etc., there is some deviation in certain cases from the course of conduct laid down for the various castes, the social order can be maintained if caste is determined by birth. Strict adherence to the course of conduct prescribed for one's caste, however, is nonetheless essential. If the duties allotted to a particular caste are entirely given up by that caste, the maintenance of the social order becomes most difficult. And therefore, birth should be the guiding principle in determining one's vocation in life and conjugal relations, whereas conduct should be recognized as the principal factor in determining one's spiritual growth. For instance, if he who is a Brāhmaṇa by birth

does not follow the rules of conduct prescribed for a Brāhmaṇa, he cannot attain salvation; on the other hand, if a Śūdra, though of good conduct and practising self-control as a duty common to all, follows the vocation of a Brāhmaṇa and earns his living by the same, he incurs sin.

Some are of opinion that since the system of division of society into Varṇas has become defunct now, it would be better if the Varṇa of an individual was determined not by birth, but by the function he performed in society. In our humble opinion, however, it would not be advisable to tamper with the system in that way. For, in the first place, though the system has become somewhat disorganized and weak due to various adverse circumstances, it has not yet become extinct. Secondly, it is God Himself who ordains the Jīvas to take birth in the different Varṇas to reap the fruits of their past actions. Man has no power to change the dispensation of God. Thirdly it would be impossible to determine the Varṇa of an individual on the basis of the conduct and activity of an individual. A great disparity is observed in the conduct of children of the same parents; nay, the same individual acts like a Brāhmaṇa during certain periods of the day, and like a Śūdra during other periods. How will it be possible, under the circumstances, to assign him a particular Varṇa ? And should a man's Varṇa be determined by his function, who will choose to accept a lower rank in society ? Difficulties will arise in matters of interdining and marriage; the result will be that the social organization will be thrown into a complete disorder and the working of the caste system will be greatly hampered. Therefore, conduct alone should not be regarded as the criterion in determining one's Varṇa.

In Chapter XIV it is stated that a man who possesses a Sāttvika nature or who dies when Sattva is predominant in him ascends to heaven; he who possesses a Rājasika temperament or who dies when Rajas preponderates is born among men; while he who possesses a Tāmasika disposition or who expires when Tamas is in the ascendant is born in a species of sub-human creatures. But here the Lord says that an individual having the preponderance of Sattva is born as a Brāhmaṇa and he in whom Rajas preponderates is born among the Kṣatriyas, and so on. Though these statements appear on the surface to be mutually contradictory, there is really no contradiction between them. It is true that a person who is rooted in Rajas or who expires during the ascendency of Rajas, is born among men. This proves that the quality of Rajas is predominant in men as a class; but among men, again, all are not on a par so far as the proportion of these qualities is concerned. There are grades and differences of quality among them, according to which an individual having the quality of Sattva predominant in him is born as a Brāhmaṇa; he in whom Rajas mixed with Sattva prevails is born among the Kṣatriyas; he in whom Rajas mixed with Tamas preponderates is born as a Vaiśya; he who has a preponderance of Tamas mixed with Rajas is born among the Śūdras; and he in whom Tamas alone is predominant, the other qualities being quite dormant, takes birth in a still lower species.

Another anomaly which presents itself before us is that in verse 10 of Chapter IX, the Lord speaks of His Prakṛti as bringing forth the entire universe, while here He speaks of Himself as the creator. These two statements, also, though appearing on the surface to be contradictory are really not contradictory. For in the verse referred to above, He speaks of Prakṛti as bringing forth the creation, not by itself but under His own

supervision. Prakṛti being inert Matter, it cannot distinguish the different Guṇas and Karmas or bring forth creation without the help of God. Therefore, wherever the Gītā speaks of Prakṛti as bringing forth the creation it should be understood as doing so under the influence and supervision of God. And similarly where it speaks of God as the Creator, the statement should be construed to mean that He creates the universe, not directly but through His Prakṛti.

By proclaiming that though the author of this creation, He is essentially a non-doer, the Lord brings out the divine character of His activities. It means that the activities of God are not tainted by the impulses of attraction and repulsion or by the sense of doership. He remains ever beyond those activities; it is His Prakṛti which does everything under His influence and supervision. Therefore, though in the worldly sense God is believed to be the agent in all such activities, in reality, however, He remains totally indifferent and ever unattached to action (IX.9-10). The statement in the verse that He is a non-doer particularly brings out this fact. When even a man of Knowledge, who acts without attachment to the fruit of actions and the sense of doership, is not considered to be a doer, and ceases to have any connection with the fruit of those actions, what wonder, then, that God should call Himself a non-doer ? Really speaking the Lord's activities are in every way transcendetnal and out of the common.

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते॥ १४॥

कर्मफले for the fruit of actions; मे My; स्पृहा craving; न (there is) none; माम् Me; कर्माणि actions; न not; लिम्पन्ति contaminate; इति thus; यः who; माम् Me; अभिजानाति knows in reality; सः (even) he; कर्मभिः by actions; न बध्यते is not bound.

Since I have no craving for the fruit of actions; actions do not contaminate Me. Even he who thus knows Me in reality is not bound by actions. (14)

Inasmuch as men performing actions have the feeling of meum, attachment, desire for the fruit of actions and the sense of doership present in them, the latencies of those actions get stored up in their mind and bring them rebirth after death and various forms of joy and sorrow. This is what is meant by one's being contaminated by actions. The Lord says in the first half of this verse that He possesses not the least hankering for any form of enjoyment derived as the fruit of actions; in other words, He requires nothing for Himself (III.22). Whatever He does, He does only for the good of the world (IV.8), free from the feeling of possession, attachment; desire for fruit and the sense of doership. He has no connection with His activities. Hence all His activities are divine in character and that is why they do not cause Him any bondage.

It has been stated above that even though performing all actions, God is really speaking a non-doer and has no connection with them, that His activities evince no partiality or prejudice and He possesses not the least attachment, sense of possession or desire for the fruits of His actions; therefore those actions cannot cause Him bondage. The saint who thus comes to know in reality this secret of God's actions begins himself to act like God, purely with a view to the maintenance of the world order, and free from the feeling of possession,

attachment, desire for fruit and the sense of doership. It is, therefore, that his actions do not bind him. It can safely be concluded from this that those who are prompted by some desire and possess identification with and attachment for actions and their fruit have not understood the divine character of the activities of God.

Describing thus the divine character of His activities and the value of knowing this secret in reality, the Lord now cites the example of the ancient seekers for liberation and commands Arjuna to follow in their footsteps and act in a disinterested spirit:—

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः।
कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम्॥ १५॥

पूर्वैः मुमुक्षुभिः by the ancient seekers for liberation; **अपि** even; **एवम्** thus; **ज्ञात्वा** having known; **कर्म** action; **कृतम्** was performed; **तस्मात्** therefore; **त्वम्** you (too); **पूर्वैः** by the ancients; **पूर्वतरम्** from the very beginning, ever; **कृतम्** performed; **कर्म** action; **एव** verily; **कुरु** perform.

Having, known thus, action was performed even by the ancient seekers for liberation; therefore, do you also perform such actions as have been performed by the ancients from the beginning of time. (15)

He who desires to realize God, the embodiment of supreme Bliss, through liberation from the bondage of births and deaths, who has turned his back on the enjoyments of the world knowing them to be ephemeral and sorrowful, and who has no craving for the enjoyments of this world or the next, is called 'Mumukṣu', or seeker for liberation. Arjuna too was a 'Mumukṣu' and had sought to abandon his duty fearing lest he might be bound by his actions. Therefore, citing the example of ancient seekers for liberation, the Lord explains to him that by mere renunciation of action one cannot be freed from the bondage of action. That was why the ancient seekers for liberation, realizing the divine character of His activities, likewise performed their respective duties, with due regard to their order in society and stage in life and in a quite disinterested spirit, renouncing the feeling of possession and the sense of doership as well as attachment and the desire for fruit. Therefore, if Arjuna sought liberation from the bondage of Karma, he should follow in the footsteps of the ancient seekers for liberation and perform his own duty disinterestedly, never thinking of renouncing the same.

Thus the Lord instructed Arjuna to perform action in a disinterested spirit. But one cannot duly perform one's duty without knowing in reality what constitutes action and what is inaction. Therefore, the Lord promises to reveal to Arjuna the truth about action, showing its intricate nature and the value of its knowledge, in order that Arjuna may really understand the truth about transcendent actions, which are free from the feeling of possession, the sense of doership, attachment and the desire for fruit.

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः।
तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात्॥ १६॥

कर्म action; **किम्** what (is); **अकर्म** inaction; **किम्** what (is); **इति अत्र** over this question;

कवयः men of intelligence; अपि even; मोहिताः are puzzled; तत् कर्म (the truth about) that action; ते to you; प्रवक्ष्यामि I shall expound; यत् which; ज्ञात्वा knowing; अशुभात् from (its) evil (binding) effect; मोक्ष्यसे you will be freed.

What is action and what is inaction ? Even men of intelligence are puzzled over this question. Therefore, I shall expound to you the truth about action, knowing which you will be freed from its evil effect (binding nature). (16)

The word 'Kavayaḥ' in this verse stands for men of intelligence, well-versed in the scriptures. The verse says that even they are at a loss to understand what is action and what is inaction. The intention is to show that their deep study of the truth and secret of Karma as expounded in the scriptures in various ways does not enable them to understand correctly what act done with what motive, or renounced with what motive, will be classed as 'action', and what act done with what motive, or renounced with what motive will be classed as 'inaction'. The word 'Api' shows that when even men of great learning and wisdom are at a loss to understand the truth of this matter, there is no wonder that ordinary men should get confused and puzzled over it. The Lord thus seeks to convey that the mystery of action is extremely difficult to unravel.

The truth about action, which the Lord promised to expound, has been explained from verses 18 to 32 of this chapter. Knowledge of this truth consists in correctly comprehending what action done with what motive, or renounced with what motive, leads to bondage in the form of rebirth, and what action done with what motive or renounced with what motive, does not lead to bondage. He who comes to know this truth in reality can never perform an action, or practise renunciation of action, which may lead to bondage. Whatever he does he does only for the pleasure of God, or with a view to maintenance of the world order, renouncing the feeling of possession, attachment, the desire for fruit and the sense of doership. That is why knowing this truth, one gets freed from the bondage of Karma.

In this connection, one may naturally argue that 'action' means that which ought to be done and has the sanction of the scriptures, whereas 'inaction' signifies refraining from action of all kinds; hence there is nothing to be puzzled about, and nothing to be known in particular in this matter. But the question of 'action' and 'inaction' is not so easy to solve and one is required to go deeper into the truth. In order to bring out this idea, the Lord says:—

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः।
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः॥ १७॥

कर्मणः (the truth) about action; बोद्धव्यम् must be known; च and; अकर्मणः (the truth) about inaction; अपि also; बोद्धव्यम् must be known; च and; विकर्मणः (the truth about prohibited action (as well); बोद्धव्यम् must be known; हि for; कर्मणः of action; गतिः the ways; गहना (are) mysterious.

The truth about action must be known and the truth of inaction also must be known; even so the truth about prohibited action must be known. For mysterious are the ways of action. (17)

Ordinarily every one knows that 'action' means a duty enjoined by the scriptures. But knowing this much, one cannot comprehend the true nature of action; for change of motive changes the very character of action. That is why the Lord states in the verse that the truth about action must be known. Therefore, what action performed in what way, and with what motive, deserves the appellation of 'action', and what particular action enjoined by the scriptures should one perform under a given circumstance, and how, is correctly known to those exalted souls alone who are well-versed in the scriptures and have realized the truth as well. Hence, in order to be able to perform a duty appropriate to one's order in society and stage in life according to one's competence one should approach a great soul who has realized the truth, and knowing the true nature of the duty from him should perform it according to his guidance and direction. This is what is meant by the statement of the Lord that "the truth about action must be known."

Even so people generally imagine that 'inaction' means suspension of all activities of the mind, speech and body. But knowing this much alone one cannot understand the true character of 'inaction.' For, according to the motive behind it, even such 'inaction' in the shape of suspension of activities of the mind, speech and body may assume the character of 'action' or even 'prohibited action', and what people regard as 'action' may be transformed into 'inaction' or 'prohibited action.' Therefore, an illumined soul alone knows in reality what action done in what way, and with what motive, or what renunciation, practised in what way and with what motive, constitutes 'inaction' and how one should perform it under a given circumstance. Therefore, those who seek liberation from the bondage of Karma should approach such a great soul and fully knowing from him the true nature of 'inaction' should practise inaction according to his direction. This is what is meant by the statement that "the truth of inaction must be known."

The word 'prohibited action' generally conveys to the popular mind the idea of sins like lying, hypocrisy, theft, adultery, violence etc. But knowing this much alone one cannot know in reality the character of prohibited actions; for ignorant men, unacquainted with the real intention of the scriptures, sometimes take it into their head to regard a virtue as vice, and a vice as virtue. Having regard to the Varṇa, Āśrama and competence of an individual, what is 'duty' or prescribed action for him is 'vice' or prohibited action for another. For instance, it is the prescribed duty of a Śūdra to earn his livelihood by rendering personal service to the members of the other orders; but such service is prohibited in the case of the Brāhmaṇa. Similarly, earning of livelihood by accepting gifts, by imparting knowledge of the Vedas and by officiating as a priest during the performance of sacrifices is the duty of the Brāhmaṇa, but a vice in the case of others. For the householder it is a legitimate duty to accumulate wealth earned by honest means and have copulation with his wedded wife after her menstruation every month; but for the Saṁnyāsī, who has renounced the world, it is a sin even to see or touch gold and woman. Therefore, the true character of prohibited action must be properly understood in order to be able to renounce lying, hypocrisy, theft, adultery, violence etc., which are prohibited for all, as well as actions which are prohibited for members of a particular class or classes of society. The character of prohibited action too can be correctly revealed only by a

great soul who possesses the knowledge of truth. This is what is meant by the statement that "even so the truth about prohibited action must be understood."

By saying that "the ways of action are mysterious," the Lord intends to show that everyone cannot determine what is action, what is inaction and what is prohibited action. Even a man possessed of learning and intellectual power sometimes fails to determine their true nature. Therefore, it is necessary to understand their truth by approaching a great soul who knows the truth in reality.

Declaring in this way the truth about action to be mysterious, and the knowledge of that truth to be essential, so as to arouse the interest and faith of the hearer in that truth, the Lord now proceeds to expound that truth as already promised:—

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः।
स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत्॥ १८॥

यः who; कर्मणि in action; अकर्म inaction; च and; यः who; अकर्मणि in inaction; कर्म action; पश्येत् sees; सः he; मनुष्येषु among men; बुद्धिमान् (is) wise; सः (and) that; युक्तः Yogī; कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् (is) one who has performed all actions.

He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is wise among men; he is a Yogī, who has performed all actions. (18)

As ordinarily understood, the word 'Karma' or action denotes all activities of mind, intellect, senses and body. Of these, again, duties which are enjoined by the scriptures are classed as Karma or 'action'; whereas sinful actions, prohibited by the scriptures, are known as Vikarma or prohibited actions. Sinful actions prohibited by the scriptures require to be wholly given up, therefore they have not been taken into consideration in this verse. The point to be considered, therefore, is what is meant by seeing inaction in action which is prescribed by the scriptures? All duties enjoined by the scriptures, such as the performance of sacrifices, practising charity and austerity as well as all vocational duties pertaining to one's order in society and those which are essential for keeping the body and soul together, when they are performed without attachment, the desires for fruit, the feeling of possession and egoism, do not bear fruit in the form of pleasure and pain in this world or the next, nor do they lead to rebirth; on the other hand, neutralizing the latencies of all previous Karmas, both good and evil they bring about liberation from the bondage of worldly existence. To know this secret is to see inaction in action. He who thus sees inaction in action duly performs his allotted duties renouncing attachment, the desire for fruit and the sense of possession. Therefore, even though performing actions he does not get contaminated by them; it is in this sense that he is called "wise among men". He has realized God, hence the verse calls him a Yogī; and since there is no duty left for him,—he has the object of his life fulfilled,—he is spoken of as having "performed all actions".

To the popular mind "inaction" means the renunciation of all activities of mind, speech and body. Even this renunciation, if it is resorted to with attachment, the desire for fruit, the sense of possession and egoism, proves to be the cause of rebirth. Nay, if it is made out of disregard for one's duties,

or for mere show, this renunciation of action, or 'inaction' is converted into a positive sin or prohibited action. To know this secret is to see 'action' in 'inaction'. He who comes to know this secret will not renounce duties pertaining to his order in society and stage in life either for fear of physical discomfort involved in their performance, or impelled by attraction or repulsion, or again out of ignorance, or for obtaining honour, fame and prestige, or any other worldly gain. Therefore, he neither falls away from his duty, nor exposes himself to rebirth by allowing his renunciation to be tainted by the sense of possession, attachment, desire for fruit and egoism; hence he is "wise among men". He is united with God, therefore, he is a Yogī, and there is no duty left for him, therefore "he has performed all actions".

Some people suggest that the word 'Karma' should be interpreted as meaning one's current (Kriyamāṇa) actions, 'Vikarma' as denoting the diversified latencies of past actions stored up in the mind (Sañcita), and 'Akarma' as meaning one's Prārabdha Karma, or part of one's Sañcita Karma which has begun to bear fruit. 'Seeing Akarma in Karma' should thus be taken to mean perceiving or foreseeing, while performing a new action, that the same action will in course of time ripen into Prārabdha, and appear in the shape of its fruit. Even so 'seeing Karma in Akarma' should be taken to mean tracing the painful or pleasurable experiences of life brought about by one's Prārabdha to one's own past actions; which were no doubt Kriyamāṇa when they were performed. According to this interpretation he who sees 'Akarma' in 'Karma' and 'Karma' in 'Akarma' will naturally refrain from sinful acts and devote himself to such pursuits alone as are sanctioned by the scriptures, as they will appear to him as involving pain and pleasure respectively. This interpretation they say is quite logical and appealing and is equally warranted by the scriptures inasmuch as the above classification of actions has been recognized by the scriptures.

The interpretation is clever, no doubt, and seeing 'Akarma' in 'Karma' and 'Karma' in 'Akarma' in this sense will be quite useful and wise too: but this will reduce the knotty problem of Karma into a very simple affair and it will be difficult to reconcile this with statements such as "Even the wise are puzzled over this question" (कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः) "Mysterious are the ways of action" (गहना कर्मणो गतिः), "Knowing which you will be freed from the bondage of action" (यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात्) "He is a Yogī, who has performed all actions" (स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत्), "Him even the wise call a sage," (तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः), "He does nothing at all" (नैव किञ्चित् करोति सः) etc. Therefore, the interpretation, though useful to some extent, is quite inappropriate, and out of tune with the context.

Here it may be asked, "Is it possible for the Sādhaka to see inaction in action, and action in inaction as stated above, and attain liberation thereby, or is it the man of perfection alone who can see action and inaction in this way?" Our answer to this question is that what is actual to a perfect soul is the ideal to be attained by the Sādhaka. Therefore, whereas the liberated soul knows the truth about action as a matter of course, the Sādhaka can get liberated by learning the truth from him, and realizing it by practice. This is what is meant by the Lord when He says in verse 16: "I shall expound to you the truth about action, knowing which you will be freed from the binding effect of action."

Revealing thus the glory of seeing inaction in action, and action in inaction the Lord further elucidates the point by discussing in the next five verses in various ways the non-

attachment of the Sādhaka as well as the realized soul who see inaction in action, and action in inaction, as stated above.

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसङ्कल्पवर्जिताः।
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः॥ १९॥

यस्य whose; सर्वे all; समारम्भाः undertakings; कामसङ्कल्पवर्जिता (are) free from desire and thoughts (of the world); ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणम् (all) whose actions are burnt up by the fire of wisdom; तम् him; बुधाः (even) the wise; पण्डितम् a sage; आहुः call.

Even the wise call him a sage, whose undertakings are all free from desire and thoughts of the world, and whose actions are burnt up by the fire of wisdom. (19)

The word 'Samārambhāḥ' in this verse, covers all duties prescribed by the scriptures, e.g., performing sacrifices and practising austerity and charity as well as vocational duties pertaining to one's order in society and natural for one's circumstances and those necessary for keeping one's body and soul together. The word 'Ārambha' denotes activity in general. The man of wisdom never does anything which is either prohibited or purposeless; this is what is indicated by adding the prefix 'Sam' to the word 'Ārambha'. During the stage of practice, the actions of men are not entirely free from desire and worldly thoughts; some of them to get tainted by desire and thoughts of the world. As for the actions of the saint who has reached perfection through the practice of Karmayoga, they are invariably free from desire and thoughts of the world. None of his acts is tainted by desire or thoughts of the world or bears a character which is denounced by the scriptures.

'Kāma' or 'Desire' signifies the longing in any form for the possession of objects of enjoyment, e.g., a wife, progeny, wealth, a house to live in, honour and prestige and fame in this world and heavenly bliss in the other. And 'Saṅkalpa' means thinking of any of these objects with the feeling of agreeability, possession and egoism, and entertaining a liking or disliking for them. Desire is an offspring or such thoughts; and thought is the parent of desire. Thought of an object leads to attachment and attachment in its turn gives rise to desire (II.62). Thus all those actions which have no desire for contact with, or separation from, any object at their back, which are wholly free from the feeling of possession, egoism and attachment, and are as if mechanically performed with a view to maintenance of the world order are referred to here by the adjective 'Kāmasaṅkalpavarjitāḥ'.

The word 'Saṅkalpa' cannot be interpreted as a mere thought, as some are apt to do, because no action is possible without its antecedent thought; thought invariably precedes every activity of mind, speech and body. To say nothing of other activities, even ordinary physical functions, such as eating, drinking, walking and so on are impossible to carry on without the prompting of thought. How, then, can, duties enjoined by the scriptures, which are referred to here by the word 'Samārambhāḥ' be performed without such prompting? Therefore, it does not appear reasonable to interpret the word 'Saṅkalpa' as a mere thought or idea.

The word 'Jñānāgni' or fire of wisdom, stands for the true knowledge of God which dawns as a result of perfection in any form of discipline. Just as fire reduces fuel to ashes, even so the fire of wisdom reduces all actions to ashes (IV.37). It is in order

to bring out its affinity in this respect with fire that wisdom has been referred to as 'fire.' Just as a seed fried on fire is a seed only in name, inasmuch as it loses its capacity to sprout, even so when actions lose their capacity to bear fruit due to the action of wisdom, they are said to have been burnt up by the fire of wisdom.

The word 'Budhāḥ' stands for wise men who have perceived the truth. The fact that even such men call him a sage, who has attained perfection through the practice of Karmayoga, constitutes the greatest tribute to him. The Lord thereby intends to show that scrupulous performance, in all their details, of duties prescribed in the scriptures in the interest of the world order, without entertaining the feeling of posession, attachment and the sense of doership with respect to them and even though one has nothing to gain from their performance, requires much patience, gravity, courage and wisdom; it is therefore that even men of wisdom declare such a man to be a sage, that is, one who has realized the truth.

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः॥ २०॥

कर्मफलासङ्गम् attachment to actions and their fruit; त्यक्त्वा having (totally) given up; निराश्रयः who no longer depends on the world; नित्यतृप्तः (and is) ever satisfied; सः he; कर्मणि in action; अभिप्रवृत्तः duly engaged; अपि even (though); किंचित् न nothing; एव at all; करोति does.

He who, having totally given up attachment to actions and their fruit, no longer depends on the world, and is ever satisfied, does nothing at all, though fully engaged in action. (20)

Man develops a natural attachment for the duties he performs in the shape of sacrifices, charity, penance, and vocational duties sanctioned by the scriptures, as well as such duties as are essential for keeping the body and soul together, so much so that he cannot help performing them, and gets so much absorbed in their performance that he forgets even God and loses consciousness of all other things. Freedom from this type of attachment is what is meant by giving up attachment to actions. And renunciation of the feeling of possession, attachment and desire with regard to all the enjoyments of this world and the next, which are obtained as the fruit of such performance, is what is meant by giving up attachment to the fruit of actions.

After renouncing attachment to actions and their fruit, the Sādhaka should give up the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' with respect to the body. This will banish from his mind the consciousness of a particular object or individual being the very prop of his existence and absolutely necessary or indispensable for the maintenance of his body. This is what is meant by ceasing to depend on the world. Having reached this state, man no longer needs anything belonging to this world; all his desires naturally get fulfilled. Having realized God, who is the embodiment of supreme Bliss, he constantly remains immersed in joy, and he remains unaltered under all circumstances. This is what the Lord means by calling him "ever satisfied".

In the second half of the verse, the prefix 'Abhi' added to the world 'Pravṛttaḥ' shows that even such a man can efficiently perform all the duties enjoined on him by the scriptures with due regard to his order

in society and stage in life, in all their details, with due attention and discriminaion. The indeclinable 'Api' indicates that while one who has not been able to overcome the feeling of possession, egoism and the attachment for fruit cannot obtain liberation from the bondage of Karma even by renouncing them, this ever satisfied Yogī even though performing all actions, does not fall a prey to the binding effect of Karma. And the indeclinable 'Eva' shows that he does not maintain the least connection with his activities. In this way, though performing all his duties, he actually remains a non-doer. The verse, therefore, makes it clear that the emancipated soul who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, having all his desires fulfilled, has no duty left for him (III.17). He needs nothing for himself. Therefore, whatever action he does, or whatever action he withdraws himself from, has the approval of the scriptures, and he does so without attachment and in the interest of the world order, hence his actions do not come under the definition of 'action' at all.

The preceding verses stated that the man of wisdom, even though performing all duties sanctioned by the scriptures, such as sacrifice, charity, penance etc., only in the interest of the world order, without the feeling of possession, attachment, the desire for fruit and egoism, is really specking a non-doer. That is why actions do not bind him. Now it may be argued that since such a Sādhaka, emulating the example of an enlightened soul, does not give up his obligatory and occasional duties, and goes on performing all his duties disinterestedly, it stands to reason that he does not incur sin. But the Sādhaka who does not perform duties enjoined by the scriptures such as sacrifice etc., and just in order to keep his body and soul together only attends to his daily routine such as answering the calls of nature, ablution and taking his food etc., must surely incur sin. In order to meet this argument, the Lord says:—

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः।
शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम्॥ २१॥

यतचित्तात्मा (he) who has subdued (his) mind and body; त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः who has given up all objects of enjoyment; निराशीः (and) who has no craving; केवलम् only; शारीरम् bodily; कर्म action; कुर्वन् performing; किल्बिषम् sin; न not; आप्नोति incurs.

Having subdued his mind and body, and given up all objects of enjoyment, and free from craving; he who performs sheer bodily actions, does not incur sin. (21)

The word 'Nirāśīḥ', in this verse, denotes one who does not stand in need of any worldly object and neither expects nor desires to derive through any action or through any individual any form of worldly enjoyment, and who has totally renounced all forms of wish, desire and craving etc. The word 'Yatacittātmā' stands for one whose mind and senses, being free from attraction and repulsion, are not influenced by contact with the objects of senses like sound, touch, taste etc., and whose body also is perfectly amenable to his control, be he a householder or a recluse, and lastly he who claims nothing as his own and has renounced all worldly possessions, no matter whether he is a householder or a recluse, is referred to by the term 'Tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ'.

The three adjectives referred to above are intended to show that if the Sāṅkhyayogī who has thus given up all connection with external objects and remains ever satisfied

in the Self refrains from actions like the performance of sacrifices and practising charity etc., and merely attends to his bodily needs, such as taking food etc., he will not incur sin. For he has not renounced those duties due to any attachment or desire for fruit, or through ignorance and impelled by the ego. The renunciation on his part, being free from attachment, the desire for fruit and the prompting of the ego, has the full sanction of the scriptures, and is therefore conducive in every way to the interests of the world.

The word 'Kilbiṣam' here denotes the sin accruing from failure to perform one's prescribed duties such as the performance of sacrifices and practising charity, or from unavoidable and unintentional destruction of life involved in activities for maintaining the body. The great soul spoken of above does not expose himself to the sin resulting from neglect of duty, nor to the sins attendant on sheer maintenance of the body. This is what is meant by the statement that "performing sheer bodily action, he does not incur sin."

The preceding verses go to establish that the God-realized man of perfection has no use either for things done, or for things not done; therefore, whether performing actions or refraining from them, he is ever free from the binding effect of action. Now, the Lord proceeds to show that even the Sādhaka who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, while performing his duties is not bound by his actions:—

यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते॥ २२॥

यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टः (he who is) contented with whatever is got unsought; **विमत्सरः** (is) free from jealousy; **द्वन्द्वातीतः** (who has) transcended all pairs of opposites (like joy and sorrow); **सिद्धौ** in success; **च** and; **असिद्धौ** in failure; **समः** balanced; **कृत्वा** acting; **अपि** even (though); **न** not; **निबध्यते** is bound.

The Karmayogī, who is contented with whatever is got unsought, is free from jealousy and has transcended all pairs of opposites (like joy and grief), and is balanced in success and failure, is not bound by his action. (22)

Anything, favourable or otherwise, obtained under the force of Prārabdha or destiny without any desire for obtaining it, or through the will of another, is called 'Yadṛcchālābha'. And 'Yadṛcchālābhasantuṣṭaḥ' means one who feels satisfied with whatever is obtained in this way. Such a man, if he obtains something agreeable does not feel attracted towards it; that is to say, he neither desires its continuance nor seeks to multiply it. Even so when he comes face to face with an undesirable object, he neither feels repelled by it nor seeks its destruction. He regards both as the fruit of his Prārabdha, and remains calm and cheerful under all circumstances.

The word 'Matsara' denotes the morbid feeling of jealously excited by the sight of others, advance in learning, wisdom, wealth, honour, fame, or any other object or virtue. The evil of jealousy remains hidden even in those who regard themselves as possessed of learning and wisdom. One may develop jealousy even towards friends and relatives, whom one loves. Apart from the feelings of joy and grief and other such morbid feelings the Karmayogī is free from the vice of jealousy as well. Hence he is spoken of as 'Vimatsaraḥ'.

The words 'Siddhi' and 'Asiddhi' have a twofold meaning. 'Siddhi' means the

thorough accomplishment, without any let or hindrance, of a duty such as the performance of a sacrifice; whereas 'Asiddhi' means failure to carry through a duty on account of some obstacle or hindrance. 'Siddhi' also means the fruition of an activity or realization of the object of an undertaking; and 'Asiddhi' means the opposite of success, i.e., failure. To make no distinction between the success and failure of an undertaking or between its successful conclusion and miscarriage, or in other words, not to feel attracted towards and elated in success or completion of an undertaking and not to feel an aversion for and dejected in the failure or baulking of a plan, is what is meant by remaining 'balanced in success and failure'.

Man has the inherent right to work (II.47); for having created mankind along with the spirit of sacrifice or duty, the Creator commanded man to work (III.10). Therefore, by refusing to work in obedience to this command man incurs sin (III.16). Besides, it is hardly possible for man to renounce work altogether (III.5); everyone is helplessly driven to action in one form or another according to his natural tendencies. Thus the statement "even though acting, he is not bound" simply means that just as the Sāṅkhyayogī who has given up worldly enjoyments and performs sheer bodily actions is not tainted with sin, even though refusing to carry on his other duties, even so the Karmayogī, though performing his prescribed duties, does not fall a prey to the binding effect of actions.

Here it may be asked: Does the fulfilment of performing actions in the above way lie only in their causing no bondage; or they lead us further ? In answer to this, the Lord says:—

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते॥ २३॥

गतसङ्गस्य of him whose attachment has disappeared; मुक्तस्य of him who is free (from identification with the body and the feeling of 'mine'); ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः of him whose mind is established in the Knowledge (of Self); यज्ञायाचरतः of him who works for the sake of sacrifice; समग्रम् कर्म the totality of actions; प्रविलीयते melts away.

All his actions melt away, who is free from attachment, who has no identification with the body and does not claim it as his own, whose mind is established in the Knowledge of Self and who works merely for the sake of sacrifice. (23)

'Jñānāvasthitacetasaḥ' stands for the Jñānayogī who sees Brahma everywhere and in everything and whose mind, therefore, remains ever consciuous of God during every action.

The duty devolving on a man by virtue of his order in society, stage in life and circumstances is Yajña or sacrifice for him. Action for the sake of duty alone, or for maintaining the tradition of duty for the sake of duty, without any reference to self-interest, is what is signified by the expression 'working for the sake of sacrifice'. Verse 9 of Chapter III referred to similar action through the word 'Karmaṇaḥ' qualified by the adjective 'Yajñārthāt', which when taken together means 'work for the sake of sacrifice'.

The word 'Karma', qualified by the adjective 'Samagram', means the totality of past actions, done in the current as well as in all previous lives of the Karmayogī, stored up in his mind in the form of latencies, as also actions which are being

performed by him as stated above. Actions are said to melt away when they lose their capacity to cause any form of bondage. The actions of the Karmayogī mentioned above not only do not cause any bondage, but just as ignited grass thrown into a heap of grass is itself reduced to ashes and at the same time reduces the heap to ashes, even so actions burnt in the fire of absence of attachment, desire for fruit and the feeling of possession melt away along with the whole stock of past Karmas, and thereafter none of his actions can ever bear fruit.

The preceding verse stated that all actions of the Karmayogī who works only for the sake of sacrifice melt away. The word 'Sacrifice' there should not, however, be taken to mean only the religious act of pouring clarified butter into the sacred fire, nor should it be understood that working for the sake of sacrifice means acts contributory to the performance of such a sacrifice. The word 'sacrifice' in this context signifies the duty which has been laid down for an individual with due regard to his order in society, stage in life and circumstances; and working for the sake of sacrifice means the disinterested performance of necessary actions for the fulfilment of that duty, and in the interest of the world order. In order to elucidate this point the Lord describes in the next seven verses, as so many forms of sacrifice, the duties in the form of practices undertaken by different men with the object of God-realization.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम्।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना॥ २४॥

ब्रह्म Brahma (the Absolute); **अर्पणम्** (is) the ladle etc., (lit., that with which the oblation is poured into the fire); **ब्रह्म** Brahma; **हविः** (is) the oblation; **ब्रह्मणा** by Brahma (manifested as the sacrificer); **ब्रह्माग्नौ** into Brahma manifested as fire; **हुतम्** (Brahma alone is) the act of pouring oblations; **तेन** by him; **ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना** who is absorbed in Brahma as sacrifice; **ब्रह्म एव** Brahma alone; **गन्तव्यम्** (is) the goal to be attained.

In the practice of seeing Brahma everywhere as a form of sacrifice Brahma is the ladle (with which the oblation is poured into the fire, etc.,); Brahma, again, is the oblation; Brahma is the fire, Brahma itself the sacrificer, and so Brahma itself constitutes the act of pouring the oblation into the fire. And finally Brahma is the goal to be reached by him who is absorbed in Brahma as the act of such sacrifice. (24)

The Practice of seeing Brahma in everything in accordance with the spirit of the Śruti text: "All this is verily Brahma etc.,"* is spoken of as a form of sacrifice in this verse. The intention is to show that the practice of seeing all things appearing diversely as the agent, the action and the instrument of action etc., as Brahma is verily a sacrifice inasmuch as it is a means of God-realization. In this sacrifice, the ladle, the oblation, the act of pouring oblation, the sacrificer and the fire are not represented by different things; to the sacrificer of this type, everything is Brahma. For he who performs this sacrifice views the mind and intellect etc., with which he tries to conceive the world as Brahma, the Sādhaka, the practice itself and every other thing as no other than Brahma; he sees everything as Brahma. He, therefore, conceives no

* सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म। (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* III.XIV.1)

difference between them at all.

In the metaphor used in this verse, the word 'Arpaṇam' cannot be interpreted as meaning 'the act of pouring oblation', for there is another word 'Hutaṁ' indicative of that action. Interpreting 'Arpaṇam' in that sense would, therefore, expose the verse to the fault of tautology. In verse 16 of Chapter IX as well, the act of pouring oblation into the fire is indicated by the word 'Hutaṁ'. The word 'Arpaṇam', therefore, has been interpreted to mean the instrument of pouring oblations according to the derivation 'Arpyate Anena'—'with which something is offered'—in other words, the 'ladle' with which the oblation is poured into the fire.

Seeing Brahma everywhere incessantly, or in other words, viewing everything as no other than Brahma, is what is meant by being "absorbed in Brahma as the act of such sacrifice". And the statement that "Brahma alone is the goal to be reached by such a Sādhaka" shows that such a practice surely leads to God-realization; the Sādhaka who takes recourse to this practice cannot attain any other fruit.

Describing thus the sacrifice of seeing everything as Brahma, the Lord now proceeds to mention the sacrifice in the form of offering worship to gods and perception of identity between the soul and the Oversoul:—

दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते।
ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुह्वति॥ २५॥

अपरे other; **योगिनः** Yogīs; **दैवम् एव यज्ञम्** sacrifice only in the shape of worship to gods; **पर्युपासते** duly offer; **अपरे** (while) others; **ब्रह्माग्नौ** into the fire of Brahma; **यज्ञेन एव** only through the sacrifice known as the perception of identity; **यज्ञम्** the very sacrifice in the shape of the self; **उपजुह्वति** pour.

Other Yogīs duly offer sacrifice only in the shape of worship to gods. Others pour into the fire of Brahma the very sacrifice in the shape of the self through the sacrifice known as the perception of identity. (25)

The word 'Yoginaḥ' in this verse stands for the Sādhakas who perform sacrifices and other duties enjoined by the scriptures renouncing the feeling of possession, attachment and the desire for fruit, It is qualified by the adjective 'Apare' in order to bring out the distinction between these Sādhakas and those referred to in the preceding verse, who see Brahma everywhere, or in other words, to show that the course of discipline followed by these, is different from that described in the foregoing verse, and that the qualifications required for the two Sādhanās are also of a divergent nature.

The word 'Yajñam', qualified by the adjective 'Daivam', denotes all actions, such as worship, offering oblations through the fire, practices of Japa, charity and feeding of Brāhmaṇas, etc., intended to propitiate the various deities recognized by the scriptures, viz., Brahmā (the Creator), Śiva (the Destroyer of the Universe), Śakti (the Divine Energy), Gaṇeśa (the God of Prosperity), the Sun-god, the Moon-god, Indra (the god of rain), Varuṇa (the god of water) and so on. Due performance of this sacrifice consists in scrupulously following these practices with faith and reverence according to the scriptural ordinance and as a matter of duty without entertaining the feeling of possession, attachment and desire for fruit and with the sole object of God-realization. The Lord

thereby shows that they too who offer worship to gods in the above manner work for the sake of sacrifice.

The distinction between the soul and the Oversoul is being felt from time without beginning because of Ignorance and due to the limitation of the body. This perception of diversity, born as it is of ignorance, is set aside by the practice of Knowledge. In other words, by revolving in the mind and contemplating on the truth learnt from the scriptures and from the lips of the preceptor the soul is dissolved or merged into the Oversoul or Brahma, the embodiment of eternal Knowledge and Bliss, existing beyond the realm of Prakṛti. This complete identification of the individual soul with the Oversoul is what is meant by "pouring into the fire of Brahma the very sacrifice in the shape of the self through the sacrifice known as the perception of identity". In the eyes of the Jñānayogī who performs this sacrifice, nothing but God in His formless, absolute aspect, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, exists in reality—not even himself, or any other thing of the objective world. He ceases to have any connection with the external world, which is a product of the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti. For him the world wholly ceases to exist.

The practice of seeing Brahma everywhere, as described in the preceding verse, and the perception of identity between the soul and God mentioned in the present verse, both are practised by the Yogī following the path of Knowledge; and in both these forms of sacrifice Brahma or the Oversoul represents the fire. Therefore, they seem to be identical in character; and union with Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, through identity being the goal of both, there is no real difference between the two. Only their methods of practice are different; that is why they have been mentioned separately. The practice described in the preceding verse consists in seeing Brahma everywhere and in everything according to the wellknown Śruti text: "All this is verily Brahma" (*Chāndogya.*, III.xiv.1); and the practice enunciated in the present verse consists in dissociating oneself from the objective world, and seeing the soul and the Oversoul as one.

Describing thus the two sacrifices in the form of worship of gods and perception of identity, the Lord now proceeds to deal with sacrifices in the form of sense-control and offering of sense-objects to the senses respectively:—

श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुह्वति।
शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुह्वति॥ २६॥

अन्ये others; श्रोत्रादीनि इन्द्रियाणि (their) senses of hearing, etc.; संयमाग्निषु into the fires of self-discipline; जुह्वति offer (as sacrifice); अन्ये other Yogīs (again); शब्दादीन् विषयान् sound and the other sense-objects; इन्द्रियाग्निषु into the fires of the senses; जुह्वति offer.

Other offer as sacrifice their senses of hearing etc., into the fires of self-discipline. Other Yogīs, again, offer sound and other objects of perception into the fires of the senses. (26)

The practice of self-discipline has been spoken of in this verse as 'fire' only in order to treat it as a form of sacrifice; and as the different senses have to be controlled individually and severally, the word 'fire' has been used in its plural form.

In Chapter II the senses have been spoken of as turbulent by nature; it is further stated there that they forcibly carry away the mind of the Sādhaka (II.60). Therefore, offering of the senses as sacrfice into the fires of self-discipline means controlling and subduing the senses by depriving them of their freedom and their power to carry away the mind, and restraining and withdrawing them from the enjoyments of the world. The process has been described through the simile of the tortoise drawing in its limbs in verse 58 of Chapter II.

The sense-control referred to here is wholly different from the restraint of senses practised by the hypocrite, as described in verse 6 of Chapter III. The hypocrite has been spoken of as merely stopping the functions of hearing, seeing, taking of food, etc., or in other words as merely restraining the senses from their objects, but not as subduing the senses; for it is distinctly stated there that the hypocrite continues to dwell on the objects of senses even when restraining them. The present verse, however, does not speak of mere outward restraint of the senses, but talks of sense-control as such. Senses which are thoroughly disciplined can no longer drag the mind to worldly objects. Hence he who keeps his senses under check, as an act of hypocrisy, without properly controlling them will go on dwelling in the mind on worldly objects; while he who has subdued his senses with the object of God-realization will cease to dwell mentally on the objects of the world. His mind will constantly dwell on God. That is the distinction between the false sense-restraint practised by a hypocrite and true sense-control as practised by a sincere aspirant.

Like the practice of sense-control referred to in the first half of this verse, the senses too have been spoken of in the latter half as so many fires in order to invest the disinterested and unattached use of the senses with the character of a sacrifice, and the word 'fire' has been given a plural form in order to show that every sense has to be trianed separately to act in a detached way.

By perceiving, through senses which are disciplined and free from likes and dislikes, only such objects as are legitimately obtained according to one's order in society, stage in life and circumstances, the objects are made to lose their existence in the senses (II.64); in other words, they are robbed of their power to produce, during their enjoyment or at any other time any unhealthy reaction on the mind or the senses. This is what is meant by "offering sound and other objects of perception into the fires of the senses". The intention is to say that while hearing censure or praise or any other agreeable or disagreeable words through the ears, seeing pleasant or unpleasant scenes through the sight, tasting something palatable or unpalatable through the palate, and even so perceiving through the other senses in a detached way all other objects legitimately obtained by force of Prārabdha or destiny, the Yogīs referred to above keep the mind balanced, and do not allow it to be swayed either by attraction and repulsion or joy and grief etc., and depriving the sense-objects of their power to agitate the mind and senses go on merging them in the senses. For when attachment and fascination for sense-objects and the sense of their being delightful have disappeared, their enjoyment cannot affect the Sādhaka in any way; like hay thrown into fire, they are all reduced to ashes.

The next verse describes the sacrifice in the form of Yoga of self-control:—

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे।
आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते॥ २७॥

अपरे others; सर्वाणि all; इन्द्रियकर्माणि functions of the senses; च and; प्राणकर्माणि functions of the vital airs; ज्ञानदीपिते आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ into the fire of Yoga in the shape of self-control, kindled by wisdom; जुह्वति sacrifice.

Others sacrifice all the functions of their senses and the functions of the vital airs into the fire of Yoga in the shape of self-control, kindled by wisdom. (27)

The word 'Ātmasaṁyamayoga', or 'Yoga of self-control', used in this verse stands for Samādhiyoga or the Yoga of absorption of the mind into God. With a view to investing it with the character of a sacrifice, the word 'Agni' or 'fire' has been compounded with it. In order to differentiate the state of Samādhi, or complete absorption of the mind into the Self, from the state of deep slumber,—in other words, to show that consciousness remains fully awakened in the state of Samādhi, which is not a state of absolute blankness, and in order to complete the metaphor, the fire of Samādhi is said to be kindled by wisdom or consciousness and not smouldering.

Dhyānayoga, or absorption of the mind in the object of meditation, is accomplished in two ways. In one of these processes, the functions of the vital airs and the senses are suspended in the first instance, and thereafter the mind is absorbed in the object of meditation. In the second process, by continued practice of meditation the mind gets fixed on the object of meditation; this is known as the state of meditation, and as the meditation gets deeper and deeper, the mind is eventually absorbed in the object of meditation; this is what they call the state of Samādhi. The present verse describes this second process of Dhyānayoga. Samādhiyoga, therefore, consists in duly absorbing the mind in the God of one's own conception and belief,—whether it is God with form and attributes, or the formless and absolute aspect of God. In this state of absorption not only does the mind stop working, but the senses too automatically suspend all their functions of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste, grasping and discharging, speech and motion, and the vital airs suspend their activities of respiration and movement. In other words, they are all merged in the Self or God. This is what is meant by sacrificing the functions of the senses and the vital airs in the fire of Samādhiyoga.

Describing in these words the practice of Samādhi as a form of sacrifice, the Lord now makes a brief reference to other sacrifices such as the one performed with material things, sacrifice in the form of austerities, sacrifice through the practice of Yoga, and sacrifice in the shape of wisdom through the study of sacred texts.

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः॥ २८॥

द्रव्ययज्ञाः some perform sacrifice with material possessions; तपोयज्ञाः some offer sacrifice in the shape of austerities; तथा even so; अपरे others; योगयज्ञाः sacrifice through the practice of Yoga; च and; संशितव्रताः observing austere vows; यतयः striving souls, earnest seekers; स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाः perform sacrifice in the shape of wisdom through the study of sacred texts.

Some perform sacrifice with material possessions; some offer sacrifice in the shape of austerities; others sacrifice through the practice of Yoga; while some striving souls, observing austere vows, perform sacrifice in the shape of wisdom through the study of sacred texts. (28)

Sacrifice with material possessions means devoting one's wealth, obtained by righteous means, through performance of duties enjoined by one's order in society, to the service of people giving up the sense of possession, attachment and the desire for fruit. Construction of wells, tanks, temples and Dharmaśālās or public houses for free lodging of travellers, providing food, cloth, water, medicine, and books etc., to the starving, afflicted, invalid, helpless and ailing as well as to mendicants; gifting according to one's capacity and the qualifications and requirements of the recipient, cow, land, cloth and jewellery etc., to learned and austere Brāhmṇas of exemplary conduct and well-versed in the Vedas; and even so expending money, according to one's resources, with a view to gratifying all other creatures,—all these are included in the expression 'sacrifice with material possessions', when carried on in the above spirit. The householder alone is qualified to perform this form of sacrifice. Those belonging to the Saṁnyāsa and other Āśramas (stages) are not entitled to earn money and spend it in the above way for public good. By using the word 'Dravyayajña', 'sacrifice with material possession', the Lord intends to show that disinterested performance of actions involving expenditure of money in the cause of public good with the object of realizing God is also included in action "performed for the sake of sacrifice".

'Sacrifice in the shape of penance' represents all activities involving hardship and endurance carried on without the feeling of possession, attachment and the desire for fruit, for purifying the mind and senses with the object of God-realization. Observing fasts and other austere vows, suffering physical hardships for the sake of duty, observing silence, exposing the body to the sun, fire and cold blasts etc., using not more than a single cloth for covering one's privities with, or at the most a pair of clothes, giving up the use of foodgrains and living on fruits and milk alone, dwelling in a forest, and other forms of penance prescribed by the scriptures and practised in the above spirit are included in the sacrifice. Vānaprasthas (those belonging to the third Āśrama, who retire to a forest hermitage and lead an austere and strictly religious life) are entitled to perform this sacrifice more than anyone else; while members of the other three Āśramas also may take up these practices according to the injunctions of the scriptures. In other words, members of all the four Āśramas are entitled to perform this sacrifice according to their respective qualifications.

The actual meaning of the word 'Yogayajña', 'sacrifice through the practice of Yoga', is known to no one else than the Lord Himself; for we get no indication of it in the verse. But in all probability, so far as one can guess, it refers to 'Aṣṭāngayoga', or the Yoga of Eight Limbs taught by sage Patañjali in his "Aphorisms on Yoga" and consisting in complete merging of the mind. Therefore, the word 'Yogayajñāḥ' occurring in this verse should be taken to stand for those Sādhakas who practise the well-known eight limbs of Yoga with the object of God-realization, renouncing the feeling of possession, attachment and the desire for fruit. These practices also, when carried on in this spirit, are included in action done for the sake of sacrifice. Hence the actions of those Sādhakas as well, are neutralized and

bring them the realization of eternal Brahma.

According to Maharṣi Patañjali the eight limbs of Yoga are as follows: Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi.*

Of these the first five, viz., Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma and Pratyāhāra, constitute the external limbs, and the last three, viz., Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi represent the internal limbs. These latter bear the collective name of 'Saṁyama'.†

'Ahiṁsā' or abstaining from inflicting the least form of suffering on any being; 'Satya' or speaking the truth in agreeable yet guileless words and with the best of motives; 'Asteya' or refraining from stealing or usurping another's property; 'Brahmacarya' or abstaining from sexual commerce in thought, word and deed at all times and under all circumstances; and 'Aparigraha' or nonaccumulation of objects of enjoyment beyond the bare necessaries of life: these five taken together constitute Yama.‡

Śauca, *i.e.,* external and internal purity of every kind; Santoṣa or remaining satisfied under all circumstances, favourable or unfavourable, and in joy and suffering both; Tapas, or observing fasts and other vows on Ekādaśī (the 11th of every fortnight) and other holy days; Svādhyāya or study of spiritually elevating scriptures and practice of Kīrtana etc., of the Divine Name; and Īśvarapraṇidhāna or surrender of everything to God and carrying out His behests; these five are known as Niyamas.§

Āsana means sitting in a steady and easy pose.$

On the attainment of full control over one's posture when the two movements of breath, viz., inhalation and exhalation are stopped, it is called Prāṇāyāma.# Filling up the lungs with external air is inhalation, and the expulsion or throwing out of internal air is known as the process of exhalation. When both these processes are suspended, it is called Prāṇāyāma.

There are three forms of Prāṇāyāma, viz; External, Internal and Optional; they are either long or short according to the range of the inhalation and exhalation, the duration of each act and the number of times it is repeated.¤

Shutting out the air thrown out of the lungs is known as an External Pause (बाह्य कुम्भक). Its process is: exhale the air with eight repetitions of the mystic world 'OM', hold the breath with sixteen repetitions of the same and inhale with four repetitions. This whole process is called the External (बाह्यवृत्ति) form of Prāṇāyāma.

Holding the air inhaled from outside is called an Internal Pause (आभ्यन्तर कुम्भक). Its process is: inhale the air with four repetitions of 'OM', hold the breath with sixteen repetitions

* यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्यानसमाधयोऽष्टावङ्गानि। (*Yoga-Sūtras* II.29)

† त्रयमेकत्र संयमः। (*Ibid.*, III.4)

‡ अहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः। (*Ibid.*, II.30)

§ शौचसन्तोषतपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः। (*Ibid.*, II.32)

$ स्थिरसुखमासनम्। (*Ibid.*, II.46)

Āsanas are many. Among them Siddhāsana, Padmāsana, and Svastikāsana: these three are regarded as more useful for Sādhakas desiring to achieve self-control. Whichever of these Āsanas is adopted, it is essential that the spine, head and neck should be kept in a straight line and the gaze should be fixed either on the tip of the nose or between the eye-brows. If the Sādhaka does not feel languid, he may as well close his eyes. The Āsana or posture in which one may easily continue for a sufficient length of time is the best for him.

\# तस्मिन् सति श्वासप्रश्वासयोर्गतिविच्छेदः प्राणायामः। (*Ibid.*, II.49)

¤ बाह्याभ्यन्तरस्तम्भवृत्तिर्देशकालसंख्याभिः परिदृष्टो दीर्घसूक्ष्मः। (*Ibid.*, II.50)

of 'OM', and exhale with eight repetitions. This whole process of inhalation, internal pause and exhalation is called the Internal (आभ्यन्तरवृत्ति) form of Prāṇāyāma.

The 'Optional Pause' (स्तम्भवृत्ति कुम्भक) consists is holding one's breath either outside or inside wherever it may be done with ease. Its process is 'inhale the air with four repetitions of 'OM' and then exhale it with eight repetitions; and hold the breath wherever it can be done with ease in the course of this process'. This process of inhalation and exhalation and holding the breath after either is known as the Optional (स्तम्भवृत्ति) form of Prāṇāyāma.

These are the main types of Prāṇāyāma, which can be further divided into many more sub-types. For instance, inhalation, exhalation and holding of breath may be practised with the same number of repetitions of 'OM' without any variation in their duration.

The space inside the body extending from the navel right up to the nostrils, through which the breath flows, represents the 'internal passage' and external space covering a distance of about 10 inches from the nostrils is known as the 'external passage' of the breath. The Sādhaka who draws air up to the navel during the act of inhalation should drive it out up to a distance of about ten inches during exhalation; he who draws air up to the heart only should drive it out up to about eight inches; he who draws it up to the throat should drive it out up to about 5 inches; and he who draws it only up to the other end of the nostrils should drive it out up to three inches only. Prāṇāyāma is long or short in proportion to the length or shortness of breath.

The number of repetitions of a Mantra or sacred formula accompanying the Prāṇāyāma and the duration of the Prāṇāyāma are closely related with one another, hence there should be no deviation with regard to them.

For instance, if the act of inhalation with four repetitions of 'OM', takes one second, the pause with sixteen repetitions and the exhalation with eight should take four and two seconds respectively. If he can do so with ease the Sādhaka may increase the duration of the act and the number of repetitions of the Mantra any number of times he likes according to his capacity. The Prāṇāyāma can be lengthened or shortened even by lengthening or shortening its duration and multiplying or reducing the number of repetitions of the Mantra accompanying the same.

The suspension of breath which automatically takes place as a result of renouncing or ignoring all external objects of the senses viz., sound, touch, colour, taste and smell, and internal objects of the mind such as thoughts and doubts,—that is to say, on one's ceasing to dwell on various objects is the fourth type of Prāṇāyāma.*

In the first three types of Prāṇāyāma referred to above, mind-control comes through control of breath, whereas in the fourth type mentioned above the breath gets automatically suspended through control of the mind and the senses. In this Prāṇāyāma, there is no definite rule as to where the breath may be held; it may be held any where, and there is no rule about duration and number either.

'Pratyāhāra' is that state in which the senses get lost as it were in the mind through dissociation from their corresponding object.†

Fixing the mind on a particular spot is called Dhāraṇā.‡ In other words Dhāraṇā consists in focussing or riveting the mind on any particular object which is sought to be meditated upon, no matter whether it is

---

* बाह्याभ्यन्तरविषयाक्षेपी चतुर्थः। *(Ibid.,* II.51)

† स्वविषयासम्प्रयोगे चित्तस्वरूपानुकार इवेन्द्रियाणां प्रत्याहारः। *(Ibid.,* II.54)

‡ देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा। *(Ibid.,* III.1)

gross or subtle, external or internal.

Here, the object of realization being God, all the three limbs of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi should be practised with reference to God.

Incessant flow of the mental substance towards the object of meditation, like the flow of the Gaṅgā towards the ocean or like the unbroken flow of oil which takes place when it is transferred from one vessel to another, is called Dhyāna or meditation.*

Samādhi or Absorption is only a more developed form of Dhyāna, in which only the object of meditation remains, and the meditator virtually loses consciousness of his self.† When through repeated practice of meditation the mind of the meditator assumes the form of the object of meditation and the meditator himself gets absorbed as it were in that object, that is to say, loses consciousness of his self as something different from that object, it is known as Samādhi. In meditation the triangular consciousness of meditator, meditation and object of meditation persists. In Samādhi, however only the object of meditation remains; in other words the meditator, meditation and object of meditation resolve themselves into one, viz., the object.

Verse 27 spoke of sacrifice in the form of 'Ātmasaṁyamayoga', or Yoga in the shape of self-control, and the present verse speaks of Yogayajña or sacrifice through the practice of Yoga. The difference between the two lies in the fact that in Ātmasaṁyamayoga emphasis has been laid on the three internal practices of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi and not on the other limbs of Yoga, viz., Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, and Pratyāhāra; for the ground of these latter is already covered by the former practices. In Yogayajña, however, all the practices have to be followed one after another.

All the sacrifices mentioned in these verses, being conducive to God-realization, can be classed under Karmayoga or Jñānayoga, the two principal ways to God-realization. Therefore, the word 'Yoga' in this verse cannot be interpreted to mean either Jñānayoga or Karmayoga in particular, but should be construed as meaning the Yoga of eight limbs as stated above.

Sacrifice in the shape of wisdom through the study of sacred texts can be performed by individuals belonging to all the Āśramas, hence the word 'Yatayaḥ' in the verse has been interpreted as 'striving souls', and not as referring to those belonging to the fourth stage, *viz.*, Saṁnyāsa. It is no doubt true that inasmuch as the Saṁnyāsīs are not called upon like householders to perform duties of the obligatory and occasional types, or to earn their bread, they can devote more time and energy to the study of the scriptures. But even among them it is only the 'striving souls' that can do so; hence the interpretation of the word 'Yatayaḥ' as 'striving souls' seems to be quite reasonable and proper. Besides, study of the scriptures is principally enjoined in the Brahmacarya. Āśrama or student life as well, and the word 'Yatayaḥ' has been used with reference to those who are engaged in the study of the sacred texts. Therefore, it cannot be interpreted as referring to the Saṁnyāsīs alone.

The word 'Saṁśitavratāḥ' refers to those who carefully observe the vow of exemplary conduct in the shape of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, non-possession etc., and are free from the evils of attraction and repulsion, egoism and pride etc. The word 'Yajña' does not occur with 'Saṁśitavratāḥ' therefore it has been interpreted as a mere qualification of 'Yatayaḥ'

* तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम्। (*Ibid.*, III.2)

† तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः। (*Ibid.*, III.3)

instead of taking it as denoting a distinct form of sacrifice.

Study of scriptures discussing the truth about God and describing His glory, virtues and activities as well as throwing light on his two main aspects, viz; that with form and attributes and that without form and attributes, recitation of psalms and songs in praise of God, chanting of His names and virtues and the study of Vedas, and Vedāṅgas (a class of literature helpful in the study of the Vedas): all these are included in the connotation of the word 'Svādhyāya'. When such 'Svādhyāya' is carried on intelligently and without the feeling of possession, attachment and the desire for fruit, it is designated as 'Svādhyāyajñānayajña' or sacrifice in the shape of wisdom through the study of sacred texts. By compounding the word 'Jñāna' with the word 'Svādhyāya' it has been indicated that study itself is a form of sacrifice, viz., 'sacrifice in the form of wisdom'. That is why the Lord calls the study of the Gīta also as a 'Jñānayajña' (XVIII.70).

Referring thus briefly to four types of sacrifice, including the sacrifice with material possessions the Lord now proceeds to describe in two verses sacrifices in the form of breath-control, paying a compliment at the same time to all Sādhakas performing the various forms of sacrifice:—

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे।
प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः॥ २९॥
अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति।
सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः॥ ३०॥

अपरे other Yogīs; अपाने into the act of inhalation; प्राणम् the act of exhalation; जुह्वति offer; तथा even so (others); प्राणे into the act of exhalation; अपानम् (offer) the act of inhalation; अपरे still others; नियताहाराः having regulated (their) diet; प्राणायामपरायणाः (and) given to (the practice of) Prāṇāyāma (breath-control); प्राणापानगती the processes of exhalation and inhalation both; रुद्ध्वा controlling; प्राणान् (all their) vital airs; प्राणेषु into those very vital airs; जुह्वति pour; एते सर्वे all these (Sādhakas); अपि verily; यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः (having their) sins consumed away by sacrifice; यज्ञविदः (and) understanding (the meaning of) sacrificial worship.

Other Yogīs offer the act of exhalation into that of inhalation even; so others, the act of inhalation into that of exhalation. There are still others given to the practice of Prāṇāyāma (breath-control), who having regulated their diet and controlled the processes of exhalation and inhalation both pour their vital airs into the vital airs themselves. All these have their sins consumed away by sacrifice and understand the meaning of sacrificial worship. (29,30)

The verb 'Juhvati' has been used in order to invest the practice of Prāṇāyāma with the character of a sacrifice. The intention is to show that Prāṇāyāma too is a form of sacrifice. Therefore, the practice of Prāṇāyāma, if carried on without the feeling of possession, attachment and the desire for fruit, and with the object of God-realization, is included in acts done for the sake of sacrifice; it therefore leads to liberation from the bondage of Karma, and brings man God-realization.

The subject of Yoga is indeed mysterious

and most difficult to understand. The secrets of it are known only to the Yogīs who have direct experience of these matters; and they alone can throw sufficient light on the subject. whatever is being submitted in this connection here is only based on a study of the scriptures and deductions made therefrom. The scriptures have enunciated various types of Prāṇāyāma. The Lord Himself knows which of them is referred to in the present verse. The reader should remember in this connection that the rectum is declared to be the seat of the vital air known as 'Apāna', and the heart to be the seat of the Prāṇa air. Inhalation, or the drawing in the external air, is known as the course of the Apāna air. For the seat of the Apāna air is located in the lower part of the body and the external air, when drawn into the body has a downward course. Even so exhalation or the expulsion of air from within is treated as the course of the Prāṇa air. For the seat of the Prāṇa air is located in the upper part of the body and the air within, when expelled from the body, moves in an upward direction. In the sacrifice through Prāṇāyāma referred to in this verse the Apāna air represents the sacrificial fire and the Prāṇa air constitutes the oblation poured into the same. Therefore, it is the process of holding the breath after deep inhalation, or Pūraka Prāṇāyāma as it is called, which is referred to here as offering the Prāṇa air into the Apāna. For in the course of this Prāṇāyāma when the Sādhaka deeply inhales air through the nostrils, the external air drawn in by him gets united with the Prāṇa air centred in the heart and both of them pass through the navel and disappear into the Apāna. In this practice the external air is repeatedly inhaled and held within the body, hence this form of Prāṇāyāma is also known as Ābhyantara Kumbhaka or Internal Pause.

In the process of offering the Apāna air into the Prāṇa, it is the Prāṇa air which represents the fire, whereas the Apāna represents the oblation. Therefore, it is the process of holding the breath after deep exhalation, which is referred to here as offering the Apāna air into the Prāna. For in the course of this Prāṇāyāma, when the Sādhaka drives out the air within through the nostrils, and shuts it out, it is the Prāṇa air seated in the heart which comes out first and stays outside, and then the Apāna air meets it and gets absorbed into it. Since the internal air is repeatedly exhaled and held outside in this Prāṇāyāma it is also known as 'Bāhya Kumbhaka' or External pause.

The word 'Niyatāhārāḥ' refers to those who take in a limited quantity only Sāttvika foods (XVII.8) which are favourable to the practice of Prāṇāyāma as laid down in the scriptures on Yoga, neither eating too much, nor observing a complete fast; for the Gītā lays down elsewhere (VI.16) that success in Yoga is achieved only by those who are regulated in diet (VI.17), and not by those who are either voracious eaters or do not eat at all (VI.16).

The adjective 'Prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ' has been used with reference to those who are devoted to the practice of Prāṇāyāma; and regard this practice as the principal means of God-realization.

All the Yogīs who practise the various forms of Prāṇāyāma as stated above may be said to be regulated in diet and devoted to Prāṇāyāma. Hence there can be no objection to the two adjectives 'Niyatāhārāḥ' and 'Prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ' being taken by implication as qualifying all of them. But their proximity in the above verses with those alone who "pour the vital airs into the vital airs" or practise 'Absolute Pause (Kevala Kumbhaka as it is technically called) justifies their being related to these latter alone. Of course, by implication, as stated above, they

can be related as well to those who offer the Prāṇa air into the Apāna, and the Apāna into the Prāṇa.

The air within the body has been classified under five heads, viz., Prāṇa, Apāna, Samāna, Udāna and Vyāna. Of these, the Prāṇa air is believed to be located in the heart, the Apāna in the rectum, the Samāna in the navel, the Udāna in the throat, and the Vyāna is believed to be spread all over the body. These five types of air are jointly known as the Pañcaprāṇas. In verse 30, therefore, the word 'Prāṇa' has been used in the plural form in order to invest the practice of controlling and suspending the function of all the five airs mentioned above with the character of a sacrifice. In this sacrifice, fire and clarified butter both are represented by the Prāṇas. In this process, there is no offering of the Prāṇa into the Apāna or of Apāna into Prāṇa, that is to say, the acts of inhalation and exhalation both are suspended and all the five airs are restrained in their respective seats. This is what is meant by controlling the course of both the Prāṇa and Apāna airs and pouring the vital airs into the vital airs. In this practice neither the external air is inhaled and held within, nor the internal air is exhaled and stopped without. The functions of the five airs are suspended in their very seats of existence. That is why the practice is designated as 'Kevala Kumbhaka' or 'Absolute Pause'.

Here one may ask: Is it unavoidably necessary to join Mantra-Japa with the various forms of Prāṇāyāma referred to in the above verses ? If so, should one repeat the word 'OM' alone or may substitute any other name of God for it ? In reply to this it may be submitted that Praṇava or 'OM' is a name of God, the Supreme Brahma, who is the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss (XVII.23). Therefore, utterance of the word 'OM' is considered to be a duty at the commencement of every good action (XVII.24). Hence the Divine Name should invariably be joined with each and every one of the sacrifices mentioned in the context. Of course, in the place of Praṇava, other names of God such as Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Śiva, and so on may be used according to the faith and inclination of the Sādhaka. For the repetition of all these names of God bears fruit according to the faith and reverence of the Sādhaka. Again, all the practices enumerated above have been invested with the character of a sacrifice, and a sacrifice performed without the use of Mantras has been declared as Tāmasika in character (XVII.13). This is another reason why the Divine Name should invariably be used as a sacred formula during these practices. In the sacrifice through breath-control or Prāṇāyāma the revolutions of any one process of Prāṇāyāma can be reckoned by counting numbers or through other mechanical devices such as striking one finger against another; but being divorced from Mantra-Japa, it will lose the character of a Sāttvika form of sacrifice. Therefore, use of the Divine Name during the practice of Prāṇāyāma should be regarded as indispensable and essential. Meditation on the Form of one's chosen Deity should also accompany this practice.

The statement contained in verse 23 above that "all actions of those who work for the sake of sacrifice melt away" has been elucidated in this verse when it says that all the Sādhakas referred to in this context have their sins consumed away by sacrifice and understand the meaning of sacrificial worship. The intention is to show that all the types of Sādhakas referred to from verse 24 to verse 30, carrying on their respective practices for the sake of sacrifice and without the sense of possession, attachment and the desire for

fruit are able to wipe out through them the whole stock of their past actions, both good and evil, accumulated in the form of latencies; therefore, they have understood the meaning of sacrificial worship. On the other hand, those who take up one or more of these practices with interested motives for the realization of any worldly aim, though they are much better than those who perform no sacrifice at all, cannot be liberated from the bondage of Karma, inasmuch as they have not understood the meaning of sacrificial worship and do not work for the sake of sacrifice.

Praising thus the Sādhakas who perform sacrifice as stated above, the Lord now proceeds to establish the necessity of performing sacrifices showing what is gained through their performance, and what is lost through their non-performance:—

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम्।
नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम॥ ३१॥

कुरुसत्तम the best among the Kurus, Arjuna; यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजः the Yogīs who enjoy the nectar that is left over after a sacrifice; सनातनम् ब्रह्म the eternal Brahma (Absolute); यान्ति attain; अयज्ञस्य to the man who offers no sacrifice; अयम् this; लोकः world; न अस्ति is not (happy); अन्यः the other world; कुतः how (can be happy).

Arjuna, Yogīs who enjoy the nectar that has been left over after the performance of a sacrifice attain the eternal Brahma. To the man who does not offer sacrifice, even this world is not happy; how, then, can the other world be happy ? (31)

As ordinarily understood, sacrifice consists in the pouring of clarified butter etc., into the sacred fire as offering to the gods, and the remnant of such oblations is the nectar referred to here. Even so in the Five Great Sacrifices and other such rites enjoined in Smṛti texts, food is offered to the gods, Ṛṣis, manes, human beings and other creatures; and what is left over after such offering may also be taken as referred to by the world 'Yajñaśisṭāmṛta' occurring in this verse. But over and above these the Lord has also mentioned in the above verses under the name of 'sacrifice' a number of other practices of God-realization such as Knowledge, self-control, penance, Yoga, study of scriptures. Prāṇāyāma etc., which have no relation with food whatsoever. Therefore, "nectar that is left over after sacrifice" should be taken to mean placidity of mind or the Sāttvika form of joy (II.64-65; XVIII.36-37) which comes as a direct result of purity of heart attained through these practices, inasmuch as it is conducive to the nectar-like experience of God-realization; and to remain ever satisfied in that joy resulting from purity of heart is to enjoy that nectar.

The Lord assures us in the first half of this verse that those who perform sacrifices referred to above attain the eternal Brahma. Whether they do so in their current life or in a subsequent life depends on the degree of ripeness of their Sādhanā. He whose practice does not lack in the correct spirit or sentiment can attain God in this very life, and speedily too; but he whose practice is deficient in one way or other attains success only when the deficiency has been made up. But the practice itself never goes in vain, and the Sādhaka is sure to attain God-realization in due course (VI.40). In order to show this, the Lord states in a general way that such Yogīs "attain the eternal Brahma".

One may ask here : Does the word 'Brahma' here mean Brahma with attributes or without attributes ? It must be remembered in this connection that Brahma with attributes and Brahma without attributes are not two entities, but only two aspects of the same God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. The difference between the Saguṇa (Qualified) and Nirguṇa (Absolute) aspects of God lies only in the conception and belief of the Sādhaka. In reality, there is no difference between the two. When the eternal Brahma is realized, all differences cease.

He who does not perform in any case any of the sacrifices mentioned above, or any other form of sacrifice mentioned in the scriptures, and in this way neglects the essential duties of man is referred to in this verse by the term 'Ayajñasya'. Of all created beings man alone is qualified to follow these practices; but he who neglects these practices is not only deprived of Mukti or liberation from bondage, but even heavenly enjoyment is withheld from him; and there is no peace for him even in this human life, which is a gateway to Liberation. For he who does not engage in spiritual practices is ever consumed by the fire of worries and anxieties of various kinds. How, then, can he attain peace in other births which are primarily concerned with the enjoyment of fruits of past actions and in which there are no means to the attainment of true happiness open to the Jīva. For it is the fruit of actions, good or bad, done in course of a human life that one reaps in other lives. Therefore, he who does not perform his duties while in a human body can never expect to attain happiness in any other species of life.

In this connection it may be urged that in this world even those who not only do not perform noble deeds enjoined by the scriptures but indulge in actions forbidden by the scriptures are found to have a wife, children, wealth, honour, fame, prestige, and other means of happiness sought after by men. How are we to reconcile this with the statement that he who does not offer sacrifice is not happy in this world ? Our answer to this question is that even the means of happiness attained by such individuals are the outcome of their past good deeds enjoined by the scriptures, and not of present sinful deeds. Their happiness here should never be attributed to their present sins, or to renunciation of virtuous deeds in the present existence. Besides, the happiness they seem to enjoy in their present life is no happiness at all in the proper sense of the term. Therefore, what the Lord intends to show here is that because of his stupidity the man without spiritual practice cannot enjoy true or the Sāttvika form of joy even in this human existence, which is an open door to the realization of God, the embodiment of supreme bliss; on the other hand, due to his craving for various forms of enjoyment he has to remain constantly merged in the ocean of grief and anxiety.

If it is asked whether service of parents by the son, service of the husband by the wife, service of the teacher by the pupil and similar virtuous deeds enjoined by the scriptures are included in works performed for the sake of sacrifice, and whether those who perform such acts are entitled to attain the eternal Brahma, our answer is that all such actions are part and parcel of man's duties. Therefore, when pursuits like warfare, agriculture and trade etc., carried on disinterestedly as a behest of God with a view to preserving the institution of sacrifice in the form of performance of one's prescribed duties, are included in sacrifice and even those who perform them attain the eternal Brahma, what wonder that services rendered to the parents by the son, to the husband by the wife and to the teacher by the pupil

treating them as very embodiments of God, or seeing God as present in them, or considering the service itself to be an indispensable duty, done disinterestedly only for the gratification of the objects of service, should be regarded as acts done for the sake of sacrifice, bringing man to a realization of eternal Brahma.

Of the various practices enumerated in this chapter under the name of sacrifice, the two practices enunciated in verse 24 and the latter half of verse 25 respectively, viz., (1) that of seeing Brahma in all—Brahmayajña and (2) perceiving identity between the self and God, can be adopted only by the Yogī who follows the path of Knowledge, and not by the Karmayogī; for in these two practices the Sādhaka canot be conceived as apart from God. Barring these two, the other practices can be followed by the Jñānayogī and the Karmayogī both without any let or hindrance.

In verse 16 the Lord promised that He would expound the truth about action to Arjuna, knowing which he would be freed from the evil effects of action. In accordance with that promise He discussed the truth about action in verses 18 to 31, and proceeds now to conclude the discussion in the following verses:—

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे।
कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे॥ ३२॥

एवम् even so; बहुविधा यज्ञाः many (other) forms of sacrificial worship; ब्रह्मणः of the Vedas; मुखे through the mouth; विततः (have been) set forth in detail; तान् them; सर्वान् all; कर्मजान् (as) begotten of action (of the mind, senses and body); विद्धि know; एवम् thus; ज्ञात्वा knowing (the truth about them); विमोक्ष्यसे you shall be freed from the bondage of action (through their performance).

Many such forms of sacrifice have been set forth in detail through the mouth of the Vedas; know them all as involving the action of mind, senses and body. Thus knowing the truth about them you shall be freed from the bondage of action (through their performance). (32)

In this verse the Lord shows that the sacrifices enumerated by Him in the foregoing verses in no way exhaust the list; besides them there are many other forms of sacrifice, such as worship through a symbol etc., laid down in the Vedas as so many means of God-realization, which when performed without egoism, the feeling of possession, attachment and the desire for fruit are included in works performed for the sake of sacrifice alone. Like the sacrifices mentioned by the Lord they too are conducive to liberation from the bondage of action, and God-realization.

The word 'Brahmaṇaḥ' in this verse can as well be interpreted to mean Brahmā (the creator) or God Himself, the supreme Deity, as some are apt to do. For verse 10 of Chapter III says that it is Brahmā who created mankind along with the spirit of sacrifice, and again verse 23 of Chapter XVII says that the Brāhmaṇas, the Vedas and sacrifices were created by God Himself. It must be remembered in this connection that inasmuch as Brahmā himself takes his descent from God, the supreme Deity, it is just the same to speak of the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas and sacrifices as proceeding from Brahmā or from God. Even so various forms of sacrifices have been set forth in detail in

the Vedas, the Vedas have been revealed by Brahmā and Brahmā, again, has taken his descent from the supreme Deity. Hence it makes no difference whether we speak of sacrifices as proceeding from God, or from Brahmā, or from the Vedas. But elsewhere the Gitā itself speaks of sacrifices as having proceeded from the Vedas (III.15), and the Vedas no doubt deal with sacrifices in detail; therefore, the word 'Brahmaṇaḥ' in this verse has been interpreted as meaning the Vedas, and this interpretation seems to be correct and proper.

By the statement "Know them all as begotten of the action of mind, senses and body," the Lord asks Arjuna to note three things with regard to actions:—

(1) Sacrifices in the form of spiritual practices enumerated in these verses, as well as all other sacrifices in the form of duties prescribed in the scriptures are accomplished through the action of mind, senses and body. Some of them involve the action of mind alone, others that of mind as well as the senses, while some others involve the action of all, viz., the mind, senses and body. There is no sacrifice which can be accomplished without the functioning of any of these. In practices which involve the suspension of the functions of body, senses and vital airs, or those in which the functions of the mind in the form of thoughts and doubts etc., are suspended, the Sādhaka should treat this suspension as well as an 'action', and should practise it without the desire for fruit, attachment and the feeling of possession; else it may lead to bondage.

(2) All duties prescribed by the scriptures, and all practices for God-realization, going by the common name of 'sacrifice', are performed through the action of mind, senses and body, which are the products of Prakṛti; the soul has nothing to do with them. Therefore, the Yogī in the path of Knowledge should never consider himself the doer with respect to any action or practice.

(3) Without action in the form of activity of the mind, senses and body God-realization, or liberation from the bondage of Karma cannot be attained (III.4). All practices enunciated for the attainment of liberation from the bondage of Karma have to be carried on through the activities of the mind, senses and body. Therefore, Sādhakas who desire to realize God or seek liberation from the binding effects of Karma, should invariably devote themselves to some form of spiritual practice renouncing egoism, the feeling of possession, the desire for fruit and attachment for actions.

In the last quarter of the verse the Lord says: "Thus knowing the truth about sacrifices you will be freed from the bondage of action." It means that the truth about sacrifices should be known in the light of what has been stated about action in verses 18 to 31 of this chapter. For action performed with a knowledge of this truth does not lead to bondage, but destroys all the latencies of Karma stored up in the mind and brings liberation to the Sādhaka.

The Lord mentioned a number of sacrifices in the above verses and stated in the end that many more would be found mentioned in the Vedas. The question, therefore, naturally arises: Which is the best of them all ? The Lord answers this question below:—

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते॥ ३३॥

परन्तप O chastiser of foes; पार्थ O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; द्रव्यमयात् यज्ञात् to sacrifice performed

with material possession; ज्ञानयज्ञ: sacrifice through Knowledge; श्रेयान् (is) superior; सर्वम् कर्म the totality of actions; अखिलम् without exception; ज्ञाने in Knowledge; परिसमाप्यते culminates.

Arjuna, sacrifice through Knowledge is superior to sacrifice performed with material things. For all actions without exception culminate in Knowledge, O son of Kuntī. (33)

The sacrifice in which material things play an important part is referred to here by the term 'Dravyayajña'. Thus offering with due ceremony clarified butter, sugar, curd, milk, sesamum seeds, barley, rice, dry fruits, sandal wood, camphor, incense, fragrant herbs etc., as oblation to the sacred fire, bestowing suitable gifts on the deserving and poor, construction of wells, tanks, Dharmaśālās etc., for the use of the public, performance of the rite of 'Balivaiśvadeva (offering morsels of cooked food before meals to gods etc.) and all other acts enjoined by the scriptures and requiring the use of material things are included in 'Dravyayajña'. In the practices enunciated above, this form of sacrifice appears under the names of 'Daivayajña' or sacrifice in the shape of offering worship to gods, sacrifice in the form of offering sound and other objects of perception into the fire of the senses, and again as 'Dravyayajña' or sacrifice with material possessions. Practices other than these, viz., those involving the exercise of discrimination and reason as well as spiritual insight—are included in sacrifice through Knowledge. In declaring sacrifice through Knowledge as superior to sacrifice performed with material things, the Lord intends to show that if a Sādhaka, instead of performing Agnihotra (maintaining the sacred fire and offering oblations to it), feeding Brāhmaṇas, bestowing suitable gifts on the deserving and poor and performing other good acts prescribed by the scriptures according to his place in society and involving the use of material things, takes up any one of the noble practices involving the exercise of discrimination, reason etc., such as practice of self-control, study of the scriptures, investigation into truth, practice of Yoga etc., he should not be regarded as having renounced all good actions; on the other hand, he should be recognized as engaged in a work of superior merit. For even a sacrifice performed with material things is conducive to liberation only when it is done with full insight into the truth about sacrifices, renouncing the feeling of possession, attachment and the desire for fruit, or else it will lead to bondage; and the above Sādhaka renounces the worldly objects even externally and his practices do not involve destruction of life in any form or shape. That is another reason why they are superior. For the attainment of true knowledge, cultivation of the proper mental attitude is more important than material things. That is why the Lord declares sacrifice through Knowledge as superior to sacrifice performed with material things.

The word 'Karma' in this verse, with the adjective 'Akhilam' and 'Sarvam' stands for the various forms of sacrifice mentioned in the foregoing verses and all other sacrifices in the form of good actions detailed in the Vedas (IV.32). By saying that "all actions without exception culminate in Knowledge" the Lord intends to show that the highest goal to be reached through these practices is the attainment of true Knowledge of God. He who succeeds in realizing God through the attainment of true Knowledge has nothing else to be achieved.

Thus it will appear that the two words 'Jñānayajña' and 'Jñāna' occurring in this verse do not mean one and the same thing,

Jñānayajña, stands for practices involving more than anything else the exercise of discrimination, reason and self-control, which are generally included under the word 'Jñāna', and carried on for the attainment of true Knowledge; while 'Jñāna' stands for the fruit of all these practices in the form of true Knowledge of God. This difference in the meaning of the two words should be carefully noted.

Praising thus the sacrifice through Knowledge and its fruit, the attainment of true Knowledge of God, the Lord now commands Arjuna in two verses to attain this knowledge and shows how to attain it, and to what it leads:—

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः॥ ३४॥

तत् that (Knowledge); विद्धि understand the true nature of (by approaching a preceptor); प्रणिपातेन by prostrating yourself before him; सेवया by rendering him service; परिप्रश्नेन (and) by questioning him (with an open and guileless heart); तत्त्वदर्शिनः seers of Truth; ज्ञानिनः (those) wise men; ते to you; ज्ञानम् (that) Knowledge; उपदेक्ष्यन्ति will instruct in.

Understand the true nature of that Knowledge by approaching illumined soul. If you prostrate at their feet, render them service, and question them with an open and guileless heart, those wise seers of Truth will instruct you in that Knowledge. (34)

The word 'Tat' in this verse stands for the Knowledge of Truth or the Reality of God, which was praised in the preceding verse as the fruit of all spiritual practices. By commanding Arjuna to attain this Knowledge the Lord intends to show that without knowing the reality of God man can never expect to obtain liberation from the bondage of Karma in the shape of births and deaths; therefore, Arjuna should make it a point to attain that Knowledge.

Although the Lord repeatedly spoke to Arjuna about the reality of God, he could not properly grasp the truth, which showed that he was somewhat lacking in faith and reverence. Therefore, in order to remove this deficiency in Arjuna and wake him up, the Lord exhorts him to approach other wise men and obtain this Knowledge from them.

The word 'Sevā' or service means living in close proximity with the teacher with a devout and faithful mind, carrying out his behests and trying to please him in every way by acting in accordance with his wishes.

'Paripraśna' means questioning anyone, with reverence and faith, with a view to ascertaining the truth about God. Moot questions like 'Who am I ?', 'What is Māyā ?', 'What is the truth about God ?', 'What is the relation between God and me ?', 'What is bondage ?', 'What is liberation ?', 'What practices will lead to God-realization ?', when put to the teacher with a guileless heart, and with the object of knowing the truth, will fall under the category of 'Paripraśna'. Questions asked with the object of mere controversy and discussion cannot be called 'Paripraśna'.

The Lord shows in this verse that for the attainment of Knowledge, faith, reverence and guilelessness of heart are of primary importance. The intention is to make it clear that spiritual instruction given to a man devoid of faith and reverence cannot be properly received and retained by him. Illumined souls need no prostrations, personal service, respect and homage for themselves. But they do not feel inclined to discuss the

higher truths when someone asks them impertinent questions with a heart full of pride and mischief and with a view to testing their Knowledge. Therefore, he who desires to attain Knowledge should in the first instance approach the preceptor with faith and reverence in his heart, and surrendering himself absolutely to the preceptor serve him to the best of his ability, and ask him questions concerning God according to preceptor's convenience and leisure. If he conducts himself in this way, a flood-tide of Knowledge will surge in the mind of the wise instructor to help the disciple with true Knowledge, even as the udder of the cow gets wet with milk out of affection for her calf, or milk begins to flow through the mother's breasts out of affection for her child. That is why the Śruti says:—

"For the Knowledge of Truth, the seeker of Knowledge should humbly approach the God-realized man possessed of Knowledge of the Vedas, taking a handful of sacrificial wood, or any other present with him".*

By adding the qualification 'Tattvadarśinaḥ' (seers of Truth) to the word 'Jñāninaḥ' the Lord intends to say that instruction in the Knowledge of Truth can be imparted only by the wise seers—well-versed in the Vedas and knowing the reality about God, and not by ordinary men, or those who possess only scriptural knowledge. The word 'Jñāninaḥ' has been given the plural form as a mark of respect for the wise seer, and not to indicate that many wise men will instruct the Sādhaka about Truth.

यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव।
येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि॥ ३५॥

यत् which; ज्ञात्वा knowing or realizing; पुनः again; एवम् like this; मोहम् delusion; न not; no more; यास्यसि you will be subjected to; पाण्डव O (celebrated) son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; येन through which; भूतानि beings; अशेषेण one and all; आत्मनि (first) in your own self; अथो (and) then; मयि in Me (the Oversoul); द्रक्ष्यसि you will see.

Arjuna, when you have reached enlightenment, ignorance will delude you no more. In the light of that Knowledge you will see the entire creation first within your own self, and then in Me (the Oversoul). (35)

The word 'Yat' in this verse refers to the Truth about God taught by the wise seer, as indicated in the preceding verse, and full realization of God according to that instruction is what is meant by realizing that Truth. When the Lord says, "Ignorance will delude you no more," He thereby shows that after realizing God through the instruction of the wise seer, Arjuna would no more fall a victim to delusion and grief as expressed by him in verse 28-47 of Chapter I, and verses 6 and 8 of Chapter II. For just as after sunrise the darkness enveloping the earth at night is bound to disappear, even so after the realization of God, questions like, 'Who am I ?', 'What is this world?', 'What is Māyā ?', 'What is Brahma ?' etc., cease to trouble the Sādhaka. In that state attachment with beings and objects connected with the body due to identification between the soul and the body, pleasure and pain caused by contact with and separation from them under the false belief that birth and death of the body means birth and death of the soul, and all other morbid feelings caused by delusion, viz., attraction and repulsion, joy and grief, etc.,

* तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत् समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम्। (*Muṇḍaka,* I.ii.12)

disappear. The material sun, for that matter, sets in the evening, when the world is again overtaken by darkness; but the sun of Knowledge, having once risen, never sets again. This Knowledge of the Truth of God is eternal and stable; it never ceases to be; therefore, when once God is realized, delusion can never make its appearance again. The Śruti says:—

"When to the wise man all beings appear as his own self, seeing unity everywhere he overcomes grief and delusion."*

The Lord says in this verse that having realized the Truth about God Arjuna would see all beings in his own self. Thereby He intends to show that having received instruction in the truth about God from wise men he would recognize the Self as all-pervading and infinite, and viewing all beings as alike would begin to treat all as his own self. That is to say, just as a man awakened from a dream sees the whole dream-world as nothing but a memory within him and perceives nothing else really apart from himself, even so in this state the Sādhaka sees the whole world as identical with himself and comprised within him (VI.29). With the dawning of this Knowledge of Self, grief and delusion disappear once for all.

Seeing all beings in the Oversoul or God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, the fruit of perceiving everything in the Self. This is what is known as the attainment of the Supreme state, attainment of the all-blissful Brahma and entering into God. The ego altogether disappears in him who has reached this state. He loses all consciousness of his separate existence; God and God alone remains in his consciousness. Even the statement that he sees everything existing in God is not the absolute truth; it is only how the scriptures describe the truth. For in his eye the distinction between subject and object does not exist; then, who is to see whom ? The state of such a Yogī is beyond description; words can only hint at it with the help of metaphors and symbols. It is only from the point of view of the mind, intellect and body of that man of Knowledge, as they exist in the eyes of the world, that he is said to perceive all beings in God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. For in the eyes of such a Yogī the world as it appears to us is really nothing but Brahma, even as ice is the same as water, clouds are the same as the sky and ornaments of gold are the same as gold; no object or being exists apart from God. The state of 'Brahmabhūta' or being identified with Brahma, referred to in verse 27 of Chapter VI, and seeing the Self present in all beings and all beings existing in the Self, as stated in verse 29 of the same Chapter, are equivalent to the first stage described in the present verse; whereas the state described in verse 28 of the same Chapter under the name of 'Brahma-Saṁsparśa' or the eternal bliss of oneness with God is equivalent to the second stage,—which is the outcome of the first,— viz., seeing all beings in God. In Chapter XVIII as well, in the course of the dissertation on Jñānayoga, the Lord first speaks of the Yogī's becoming 'Brahmabhūta' or 'one with Brahma' in verse 54; whereas in the next verse He describes how the Yogī enters into Him through supreme Devotion (Parā Bhakti) in the form of Knowledge. The present verse delineates the very same process.

Describing thus the process of acquiring the Knowledge of truth from wise men and the fruit of such Knowledge, the Lord now reveals the glory of that Knowledge.

* यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः। तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः॥ *(Īśopaniṣad)*

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः।
सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं सन्तरिष्यसि॥ ३६॥

चेत् if; सर्वेभ्यः पापेभ्यः of all sinners; अपि even; पापकृत्तमः the foulest sinner; असि you are; ज्ञानप्लवेन by the raft of Knowledge; एव surely; सर्वम् वृजिनम् the whole (ocean of) sins; सन्तरिष्यसि you will (be able to) cross.

Even though you were the foulest of all sinners, this Knowledge alone would carry you, like a raft, across all your sin. (36)

By using the words 'Cet' and 'Api' in this verse, the Lord intends to point out to Arjuna that he was not actually a sinner, that he was a man possessed of divine virtues (XVI.5), that he was the Lord's devotee and friend (IV.3); sin, therefore, could find no lodgement in him. But the Knowledge the Lord was speaking of possessed such wonderful potency and efficacy that even if he were the worst type of sinner, he would be able to get over any number of sins with the help of that Knowledge. The greatest of sins would not be able to obstruct his progress.

A sinner is not ordinarily qualified for Knowledge; therefore, it is difficult for him to get the boat of Knowledge whereby he may be able to cross the vast ocean of his sins. But if through the Grace of God or that of saints, or by any other means, he somehow succeeds in obtaining Knowledge, he will be immediately redeemed, even though he may be the greatest of sinners. This is what the Lord seeks to convey through this verse.

Acts of virtue also, when performed with an interested motive, lead to bondage. Therefore, it is quite true that one is able to cross the ocean of sins only when one is free from the bondage of all actions—virtuous as well as sinful. But man is ever free to abandon the acts of virtue, and can as well renounce the fruit of such acts whenever he chooses to do so; but it is not within his power to cross the ocean of sins without Knowledge. Therefore, freedom from the bondage of virtue should be taken as implied by a reference to the crossing over of all sins by the raft of Knowledge.

Just as a man who has taken his seat on board a ship very easily goes to the other shore riding over the seas, even so he who is established in Knowledge regarding himself as wholly aloof from the world, changeless, eternal and infinite, very easily crosses over all sins done by him in the course of innumerable past lives as well as in the current life; in other words, he obtains complete freedom once for all from the bondage of all actions. This is what is meant by one's crossing over all sins by the raft of Knowledge.

The word 'Eva' in the verse indicates certainty. It brings out the fact that it is possible for a man corssing the sea by a boat to get drowned if the vessel strikes against a rock or a gale overtakes it. But the boat in the form of Knowledge is eternal; he who takes refuge in it is sure to cross over all sins, and there is not the least probability of his suffering a fall.

An illustration taken from the world is incapable of representing a spiritual truth in its entirety and can reveal it only partially. In the next verse, therefore, the Lord further brings out the glory of knowledge through the illustration of the fire.

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा॥ ३७॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; यथा as; समिद्धः अग्निः the blazing fire; एधांसि the fuel; भस्मसात्कुरुते turns to ashes; तथा even so; ज्ञानाग्निः the fire of Knowledge; सर्वकर्माणि all actions; भस्मसात्कुरुते turns to ashes.

For, as the blazing fire turns the fuel to ashes, Arjuna, even so the fire of Knowledge turns all actions to ashes. (37)

The word 'Sarvakarmāṇi' means not only all one's past and present Karmas but also their fruits in the form of pleasure and pain, and their causes in the shape of ignorance and egoism, the feeling of possession, the impulses of attraction and repulsion and all other modifications of the mind. The eradication of all these by the fire of Knowledge is borne out by the Śruti as well, which says:—

"On the realization of God in all his aspects the knot of ingorance within the heart of a man gets snapped, that is to say, identification with the gross body disappears; all doubts are set at rest once for all; and all Karmas with their fruits are eradicated."*

In verse 19 of this chapter, the same idea has been expressed by the adjective 'Jñānāgnidagdhakarmāṇam'.

* * *

The latencies of actions done in this life as well as in previous lives remain stored up in man's mind and are known as 'Sañcita' Karmas. Such of these latencies as are ripe to bear fruit in the current life are called 'Prārabdha' Karmas, and new actions that are performed in the current life are known as 'Kriyamāṇa' Karmas. The moment the fire of Knowledge manifests itself the whole stock of 'Sañcita' Karmas in the form of latencies disappears. And inasmuch as the man of Knowledge comes to realize his aloofness from the mind, intellect and the body, these latter, even though going through the experiences brought about by Prārabdha, fail to produce any unhealthy reactions like joy and grief on his mind. In this way his Prārabdha Karmas also get extinct so far as he is concerned. As regards his current actions, they do not leave any impressions at all inasmuch as he no longer entertains the feeling of doership or possession, nor attachment and desire with respect to them. Therefore, such actions cease to be actions at all.

Thus all his actions are neutralized. And when the actions are neutralized, how can they bear any fruit ? And in the absence of any latencies of past actions his mind can no longer be subject to modifications like attraction and repulsion, joy and grief, etc. Therefore, along with his Karmas, all morbid feelings and all fruits of Karma also get extinct.

Thus in verses 34 to 37 the Lord not only exhorted Arjuna to attain the Knowledge of Truth by rendering service to the wise, but also pointed out the fruit of that Knowledge and its glory. At this point it may be asked: Is this Knowledge attained after hearing the Truth from the wise and going through the practices of Jñānayoga like reflection and meditation etc., or is there any other means of attaining it ? In answer to this the Lord further reveals in the next verse the glory of Knowledge, and adds that it can be automatically attained through the practice of Karmayoga as well.

* भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः। क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे॥ (Muṇḍ. *Up;* II.ii.8)

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते।
तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति॥ ३८॥

इह here, on earth; ज्ञानेन सदृशम् (as great) as Knowledge; पवित्रम् purifier; हि undoubtedly; न विद्यते (there) is none; तत् that (Knowledge); कालेन योगसंसिद्धः (one) purified through a prolonged practice of Karmayoga; स्वयम् automatically; आत्मनि in the self; विन्दति discovers.

On earth there is no purifier as great as Knowledge, he who has attained purity of heart through a prolonged practice of Karmayoga automatically sees the light of Truth in the self in course of time. (38)

Practices which wipe out man's sins and purify him, e.g., the performance of sacrifices, charity, penance, adoration and worship, vows and fasts, breath-control, control of the senses and mind, selfrestraint, Japa and meditation, a bath in sacred rivers like the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā and in the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā etc.,—none of these can compare with true Knowledge as a purifier; for they are all means to the attainment of Knowledge, and Knowledge is their fruit or goal. These practices are regarded as purifying only because they are helpful in the revelation of Knowledge. Through Knowledge man comes to realize the truth about God; and completely rid of sins like lying, hypocrisy, theft and adultery, of all morbid feelings like attraction and repulsion, joy and grief, egoism and the sense of possession, etc., as well as of ignorance, the root of all evils, he becomes absolutely pure. His mind, senses and body as well become exceptionally pure; the result is that even those who see or touch his person, make obeisance to him or even think of him, speak to him or come in touch with him in any other way, with reverence in their heart, get purified. Hence there is nothing on earth as purifying as the Knowledge of truth about God.

The indeclinable 'Iha' in this verse refers to this material world, which is a product of Prakṛti, showing thereby that of all that exists in this world of Māyā Knowledge is the best purifier; and there is nothing else so purifying as that. But this does not mean that as a means of purification it is even superior to God, who is wholly beyond the realm of Prakṛti,—all-pervading and all-powerful, the supreme Lord of all the worlds, the ocean of virtues,—who is possessed of attributes and devoid of attributes at the same time, and is with form as well as formless, the Controller of Prakṛti, the friend of all and the substratum of all. He is the embodiment of highest purity; Knowledge derives its purity only from the fact that it serves as a means to His Realization. In fact, there is nothing approaching God, much less superior to Him. That is why Arjuna extols the Lord in the following words elsewhere; "You are the Ultimate Reality, the supreme Abode, the greatest purifier" (X.12); and the great Bhīṣma also said, "God is the greatest of all purifiers, and the most auspicious among all auspicious objects." *(Mahā. Anu.,* 189-90).

The words 'Kālena Yogasaṁsiddhaḥ' stand for the Yogī whose heart, through a prolonged practice of Karmayoga, has become transparent and pure due to the disappearance of attraction and repulsion, who has attained perfection in Karmayoga, and all whose actions are divorced from the feeling of possession, attachment and the desire for fruit, and are performed for the sake of God and according to His injunctions. Therefore, the statement in the verse that the perfect

Karmayogī automatically sees the light of Truth in the Self means that the moment his practice reaches its culmination, the light of Truth dawns on his mind of itself through the Grace of God. That is to say, for attaining that light he has neither to adopt any other practice, nor to lead a life of strict discipline under a Guru or Master.

Revealing thus the glory of Knowledge, and showing that Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga are the two ways of realizing it, the Lord now discusses who is qualified for the revelation of that Truth, and declares the attainment of supreme peace as its fruit.

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति॥ ३९॥

संयतेन्द्रियः he who has mastered his senses; **तत्परः** (is) exclusively devoted to spiritual practice; **श्रद्धावान्** (and is) full of faith; **ज्ञानम्** the light of Truth; **लभते** attains; **ज्ञानम्** the light of Truth; **लब्ध्वा** having attained; **अचिरेण** without delay, immediately; **पराम् शान्तिम्** supreme peace (in the form of God-realization); **अधिगच्छति** attains.

He who has mastered his senses, is exclusively devoted to his practice and is full of faith, attains Knowledge; having had the revelation to Truth, he immediately attains supreme peace (in the form of God-realization). (39)

The word 'Śraddhā' means faith in the excellence and infallibility of the Vedas and other scriptures, the commandments of God and the teachings of holy men, with as much certainty as in the existence of this perceptible objective world, and accompanied by the feeling of highest reverence for them as well as belief in the existence of the other world. He who is possessed of such unflinching faith is called 'Śraddhāvān'. The statement that the man of faith attains illumination, therefore, means that such a man alone can approach the wise seers with humility and submission and obtaining instruction from them through prostration, service and meek questions, can attain the light of Truth by following the path of Knowledge or Action. He who lacks faith can never be regarded as qualified to receive this light.

A man can approach the wise even without faith, and can even bow to him, serve him and ask him questions with a view to testing their knowledge, exhibiting his own learning, or for gaining honour and prestige or even for displaying his faith. But he will not thereby attain Knowledge; for sacrifice, charity, penance and any other action, done without faith, has been declared to be fruitless (XVII.28). Therefore, faith is the principal factor contributing to the attainment of Knowledge. The greater the degree of faith one brings to bear on his practice for Knowledge, the sooner is it able to bring about the revelation of Truth.

It is faith which gives the impetus to one's Sādhanā or spiritual practice; and earnestness is the test of faith. Indolence, sloth and other evils make their appearance during the Sādhanā due to lack of faith. That is why one cannot push one's Sādhanā with earnestness. Sādhakas unacquainted with the meaning of faith overestimate their inadequate faith; and when it fails to bring the desired result, they take no notice of their lack of earnestness, and jump to the conclusion that God-realization does not come even to one possessed of faith. But it is an error on their part to think so. The truth of the matter is that the degree of earnestness

one evinces in one's Sādhanā depends on the amount of faith one has. Suppose a man loves money and starts a business. If he believes that he will get money through that business, he will take to it so whole-heartedly that he will not grudge undergoing any amount of physical discomfort due to irregularity in meals, sleep, rest and so on. On the other hand, increase of wealth will bring more and more delight to his heart. Even so it is faith which brings earnestness in other matters also. Therefore, when one comes to develop faith in Knowledge of the truth relating to God, which opens the door to the realization of God,— the embodiment of eternal Knowledge and Bliss, and the bestower of supreme peace and supreme happiness,— and in the means of attaining that Knowledge, it is but natural for him to bring extreme earnestness to bear on his practice. Lack of earnestness in one's practice is a sure sign of lack of faith. In order to indicate this fact, the adjective 'Tatparaḥ' ('exclusively devoted to spiritual practice') has been added to the word 'Śraddhāvān'.

It is no doubt true that through intensive practice pursued with faith sins are destroyed and attraction for the enjoyments of the world ceases, so that it is easy to control the mind and senses, and thereafter to attain true Knowledge of God as well. But the Sādhaka who does not know this secret comes to regard even slack and slovenly practice as vigorous and intensive. This does not bring him success, and the result is that in despair he gives up the practice altogether. By the use of the adjective 'Saṁyatendriyaḥ', therefore, the Lord, cautions the Sādhaka that till he succeeds in controlling his mind and senses he should with full faith and firm resolution go on increasing the intensity of his practice; for the test of intensive practice carried on with full faith is complete mastery over the senses. The more intensive the practice pursued with faith, the greater is the control over the senses. Deficiency in practice should, therefore, be measured by the deficiency of sense-control, and the deficiency of faith should be measured by the deficiency in practice. The adjective 'Saṁyatendriyaḥ' has been used to make this point clear.

The statement that having gained Knowledge he immediately attains supreme peace, indicates that just as the moment the sun makes its appearance in the horizon darkness is lifted and all objects become visible, even so the moment the reality of God is known ignorance disappears, and God is revealed (V.16). The intention is to show that the extinction of ignorance and all its progeny in the shape of latent desires, as well as of morbid feelings like attraction and repulsion, joy and grief, etc., and of all Karmas—good and evil both, as well as attainment of the Knowledge of God and revelation of God—all these take place simultaneously and it is the direct perception of God, the embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss, that has been referred to here as the attainment of supreme peace.

Showing thus that the man of faith attains Knowledge and Knowledge leads to the attainment of supreme peace, the Lord now censures him who lacks faith, is devoid of discrimination and is at the same time possessed by doubt.

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्दधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥ ४० ॥

अज्ञः he who lacks discrimination; **च** and; **अश्रद्दधानः** (is) devoid of faith; **च** and; **संशयात्मा**

(is at the same time) possessed by doubt; विनश्यति is lost (to the spiritual path); संशयात्मनः for such a doubting soul; न neither; अयम् this; लोकः world; अस्ति there is; न nor; परः the other world, or the world beyond; न nor (even); सुखम् happiness.

He who lacks discrimination, is devoid of faith, and is at the same time possessed by doubt is lost to the spiritual path. For the doubting soul there is neither this world nor the world beyond, nor even happiness. (40)

The word 'Ajñaḥ' in this verse stands for the man who is devoid of intelligence and reason, i.e., who lacks the capacity to differentiate between truth and untruth, the self and non-self, so that he is unable to decide what is duty and what is not duty. The word 'Aśraddadhānaḥ' stands for the man who lacks faith in God and the other world, in the scriptures which deal with the means of God-realization and contain references to the other world, in the wise men and their teachings as well as in the fruits of practices taught by them. And 'Saṁśayātmā' stands for the doubting soul, who cannot arrive at any conclusion about the existence of God and the other world, or about any other thing whatsoever; and entertains doubt about everything. The word 'Saṁśayātmā' along with the adjectives 'Ajñaḥ' and 'Aśraddadhānaḥ' means the doubting soul lacking in discrimination and devoid of faith. Being devoid of intelligence such a man cannot correctly grasp the import of the Vedas and other scriptures, or the teachings of wise men and the practices taught by them; and because of lack of faith in whatever he understands, he entertains doubt at every step and cannot therefore decide what he should do and what he should not do. It is, therefore, but natural that he fritters away his human life in vain and remains totally deprived of the supreme good it would have surely brought to him and he made the best use of it. This is what is meant by the statement that such a man "is lost to the spiritual path".

On the other hand, he who possesses the power to discriminate in every matter, and is endowed with faith in the Vedas and other scriptures as well as in the teachings of saints, does not come to ruin in the above manner. Like Arjuna, he can with the help of faith and reason remove his doubts for all time and take to the path of duty, and attaining success can achieve the end of human existence. Even so the ignorant man lacking discrimination, if endowed with faith, can because of that faith resolutely adopt a particular course of Sādhanā prescribed by a wise man and attain the highest object of his life through the grace of the wise man (XIII.25). But the doubting soul who possesses neither discrimination nor faith is left without any means to remove his doubts, and therefore surely takes a downward course until faith and discrimination dawn upon him.

The verse says that "for the doubting soul there is neither this world nor the world beyond, nor even happiness." There by it shows that a spiritual fall is not the only loss he suffers. So long as a man is possessed by doubt, and is not able to remove it, he cannot expect to prosper in the world by obtaining wealth, glory and fame etc., nor can he enjoy the blessings of heaven after death nor even the joys of this world; for it is not possible for him to attain success in any sphere so long as he continues to entertain doubt in his mind, and fails to arrive at a definite conclusion. Therefore, doubt should be removed at any cost.

Thus declaring doubt coupled with lack of discrimination and lack of faith as an obstacle to the attainment of Knowledge, the Lord now praises the Karmayogī, free of doubt and self-possessed, with a view to encouraging Arjuna to take to the practice of Karmayoga, overcoming his doubt by discrimination.

योगसन्न्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसञ्छिन्नसंशयम्।
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय॥ ४१॥

धनञ्जय O Arjuna; योगसन्न्यस्तकर्माणम् him who has dedicated all his actions to God according to the spirit of Karmayoga; ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् him whose doubts have been torn to shreds by wisdom; आत्मवन्तम् him who is self-possessed; कर्माणि actions; न not; निबध्नन्ति bind.

Arjuna, actions do not bind him who has dedicated all his actions to God according to the spirit of Karmayoga, whose doubts have been torn to shreds by wisdom, and who is self-possessed. (41)

The word 'Yogasaṁnyastakarmāṇam' here cannot be taken to refer to a follower of the path of Knowledge who has renounced all his actions according to the spirit of Jñānayoga. For renunciation of action is not the subject of discussion here. In the very next verse the Lord commands Arjuna to fight establishing himself in Yoga, and refers to the statement made in the present verse as the ground for this command, as is indicated by the word 'Tasmāt' (therefore). The Lord would not have exhorted Arjuna to act that way, had he extolled in this verse the Jñānayogī who had renounced all actions according to the spirit of Jñānayoga. Therefore, instead of taking the word 'Yogasaṁnyastakarmāṇam' in that sense, it should be interpreted as referring to the Karmayogī who has dedicated all his actions to God according to the spirit of Karmayoga, totally renouncing the feeling of possession, attachment and desire with regard to those actions and their fruit (III.30; V.10). This interpretation appears more to agree with the trend of thought as pursued in these verses.

The word 'Jñāna' forming part of the compound word 'Jñānasaṁchinnasaṁśayam' stands for the power of discrimination, which goes to the root of a thing and dispels all doubt with regard to it. Derived from the root 'ज्ञा' (to know), the word 'Jñāna' means knowledge. The Gītā has used it, as shown below, in various senses according to the context:—

(a) In verse 12 of Chapter XII, meditation has been declared to the superior to 'Jñāna', and renunciation of the fruit of actions to be even superior to meditation. The word 'Jñāna', therefore, has been used there in the sense of discrimination developed through a study of the scriptures and the teachings of saints.

(b) In verse 17 of Chapter XIII, the word 'Jñāna' appears as an adjective qualifying the object of Knowledge. Therefore, the word stands there for God Himself, the very embodiment of eternal Knowledge and Bliss.

(c) In verse 42 of Chapter XVIII, 'Jñāna' forms part of the natural duties of the Brāhmaṇa; therefore, it has been interpreted to mean the study and teaching of the scriptures.

(d) In verses 36 to 39 of this chapter, the word has been used every where in the sense of Knowledge of the truth about God; for 'Jñāna' has been spoken of there as turning all actions to ashes, as carrying across all sins, the best purifier, the outcome

of perfection of Karmayoga and the immediate cause of supreme peace. Even so, in verse 16 of Chapter V, it has been spoken of as revealing the Supreme, and in verses 1 and 2 of Chpater XIV as the uttermost wisdom; hence there too it means Knowledge of the truth relating to God. In other places as well it should be understood in this sense according to the context.

(e) The 'Jñāna' referred to in verse 21 of Chapter XVIII is the means of cognizing the various objects as manifold and diverse; hence it means knowledge of the Rājasika type.

(f) In verse 11 of Chapter XIII, it stands as a collective name for the various means of attaining wisdom.

(g) In verse 3 of Chapter III, being conjoined with the word 'Yoga', it means Jñānayoga or Sāṅkhyayoga, the path of Knowledge. Similarly in other places too the word occurs in the sense of Sāṅkhyayoga.

Even so there are other places in the Gītā where the word 'Jñāna' has been used in other senses. The reader should read those meanings according to the context.

Some people are apt to take the word 'Jñāna' here in the sense of Knowledge of the truth relating to God. But this is not correct, because Knowledge of the truth relating to God immediately uproots all forms of doubts and reveals God, so that it is no longer necessary to adopt any other practice for realizing God, the Knowledge referred to above being the consummation of all practices. But here in the very next verse the Lord commands Arjuna to establish himself in Karmayoga cutting asunder with the sword of knowledge the doubt existing in his heart. As explained above the word should, therefore, be understood in this verse in the sense of wisdom which dispels doubts.

Questions arising in the mind of a man who is given to reasoning are known as doubts. The following are some of the typical questions that generally arise in the mind of a doubting soul; Does God exist or not ? If He exists, what is He like ? Does the other world exist or not ? If it exists, how is one to believe in it and where does it exist ? Are the body, senses, mind and intellect the same as the soul, or different from the soul ? Are they constituted of matter or of spirit ? Are they all-pervading or finite ? Who is the doer and enjoyer, the embodied soul or Prakṛti ? Is the soul one, or there are many souls ? If one, how ? And if many, how ? Is the embodied soul free or dependent ? If dependent, how and on whom ? Which is the better way to attain liberation from the bondage of Karma,—total renunciation of actions, or their performance on the lines of Karmayoga, or to follow the discipline of Sāṅkhyayoga? etc.

Thinking over these questions with the help of reason and arriving at a definite conclusion about them, one should decide one's duty. This is what is meant by tearing one's doubts to shreds by wisdom.

The word 'Ātmā' forming part of 'Ātmavantam' used in this verse stands for the mind and sense and 'Ātmavantam' refers to him who has established full control over his mind and senses,—who has subjugated the mind and senses.

The actions which such a man performs are not only approved of by the scriptures but are altogether free from the feeling of possession, attachment and the desire for fruit; that is why they are no longer capable of binding him. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the second half of the verse.

Praising thus the follower of the path of Action, the Lord concludes the chapter with an exhortation to Arjuna to establish himself in Karmayoga and fight:—

**तस्मादज्ञानसम्भूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः।
छित्त्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत॥ ४२॥**

तस्मात् therefore; भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; हृत्स्थम् existing in your heart; अज्ञानसम्भूतम् born of ignorance; एनम् this; आत्मनः of yours; संशयम् doubt; ज्ञानासिना with the sword of wisdom; छित्त्वा slashing to pieces; योगम् Karmayoga in the shape of even-temperedness; आतिष्ठ be established in; उत्तिष्ठ (and) stand up (for the fight).

Therefore, Arjuna, slashing to pieces, with the sword of wisdom, this doubt in your heart, born of ignorance, establish yourself in Karmayoga in the shape of even-temperedness, and stand up for the fight. (42)

Using the word 'Tasmāt', indicative of reason, the Lord has encouraged Arjuna to establish himself in Karmayoga. The intention is to draw his attention to the statement contained in the preceding verse, viz., that actions do not bind him who acts in accordance with the spirit of Karmayoga, and induces Arjuna to do likewise.

The note of address used for Arjuna in this verse is 'Bhārata' The significance of this is to remind Arjuna of the ideal character of the royal sage Bharata as a man of action who was at the same time extremely devoted to spiritual practices. Arjuna being a descendant of Bharata, he should try to emulate his great ancestor in courage, patience and depth of wisdom and earnestly take up the performance of his duty.

The adjective 'Ajñānasambhūtam' used with the word 'Saṁśayam' shows that ignorance is the cause of doubt. Therefore, the moment ignorance is destroyed by wisdom doubts also disappear. The adjective 'Hṛtsthaṁ' indicates that the heart or mind is the seat of these doubts; therefore, one who possesses control over the mind can easily overcome them.

The fact that the Lord asks Arjuna to get over his doubts raises the question whether the latter was actually a victim of doubts. In order to get a reply to this question let us refer to the sequence of events as depicted in the Gītā. In this connection it will appear that Arjuna originally regarded war as justifiable and it was, therefore, that he came fully prepared to the field of battle to meet his foe and requested the Lord to place his chariot between the two armies. But when he saw his friends and relations assembled on both sides ready to risk their lives, he was overtaken by infatuation and grief and began to look upon war as a great sin (I.28-47). The Lord thereupon commanded him to shake off his faint-heartedness (II.3), but still he could not decide his course of action. He found himself at his wit's end and exclaimed: "How shall I fight elders like Bhīṣma and Droṇa (II.4); we do not know what is good for us, nor do we know who will win (II.6); tell me what is decidedly good for me, my mind is puzzled with regard to my duty (II.7)." From all this it is clear that doubt existed in Arjuna's mind and his faculty of discrimination had been somewhat dulled by infatuation; that is why he was unable to determine his duty. Besides, in Chapter VI, Arjuna distinctly says that none other than the Lord could clear his doubt (VI.39); and having heard the entire teaching of the Gītā says that he stood free from doubts (XVIII.73). The Lord also repeats every now and then, in the course of His discourse, that Arjuna should not doubt His statement, which was undoubtedly true (VIII.7; XII.8). This also proves that Arjuna's mind was possessed

by doubt and it was on account of this doubt that he had got ready to renounce his own duty in the form of participation in war. Therefore, by asking Arjuna to slash the doubt in his heart, the Lord showed that he should be ready to carry out His behests without entertaining the least doubt in his mind.

By using the word 'Ātmanaḥ' with 'Saṁśayam' the Lord indicated that Arjuna was His own friend and devotee, and as such he should be capable of slashing and removing the doubts existing in the hearts of all other people; but if he could not do so, he should at least be able to remove the doubts in his own heart.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानकर्मसन्न्यासयोगो नाम चतुर्थोऽध्याय: ॥४॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the fourth chapter entitled ''The Yoga of Knowledge as well as the disciplines of Action and Knowledge''.

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter V

The chapter deals with the paths of Action and Knowledge both. Term 'Saṁnyāsa' is an equivalent of Sāṅkhyayoga or the Path of Knowledge. That is why the chapter has been given the title of "Karmasaṁnyāsayoga" or "The Yogas of Action and Knowledge."

Title of the Chapter

The chapter opens with Arjuna's query regarding the relative superiority of Sāṅkhyayoga or Karmayoga. Answering the question in the second verse, the Lord says that though both are conducive to spiritual good, Yet Karmayoga, or the Path of Action, is superior to Karmasaṁnyāsa, or the Path of Knowledge. Pointing out the greatness of the Karmayogī in the third, the fourth and the fifth He establishes the oneness of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga on the ground of identity of their fruit. In the sixth it is stated that without practising Karmayoga perfection in Sāṅkhyayoga is difficult to attain, whereas Karmayoga brings realization of God in no time. Describing the detachment of the Karmayogī in the seventh, the non-doership of the Sāṅkhyayogī has been brought out in the eighth and ninth verses. The tenth and eleventh verses praise those who act in a spirit of dedication to God, as well as the Karmayogī who is predominantly a man of action, and also point out that the actions of Karmayogīs make for self-purification. The twelfth verse shows that the Karmayogī attains ever-lasting peace, whereas he who acts with a selfish motive gets bondage. Depicting the state of the Sāṅkhyayogī in the thirteenth, it is stated in the fourteenth and fifteenth that the Absolute determines not the doership nor the doings of beings, nor even their contact with the fruit of actions, nor does It associate Itself with the virtue or sin of anyone; and that beings get deluded only because their knowledge stands veiled by ignorance. After revealing the glory of Knowledge in the sixteenth, the exclusive practice of Jñānayoga is described in the seventeenth. Verses 18 to 20 describe the state of the exalted soul who is constantly established in identity with Brahma, how he views all alike and attains the highest goal. Verse 21 shows the way to the attainment of eternal Bliss and also speaks of its actual attainment. Verse 22 declares enjoyments to be a source of suffering and transient, adding that men possessing discerning do not indulge in them. Verse 23 calls him a yogī and happy man, who can control the urgings of lust and anger. Verses 24 to 26 describe the state of perfection in Sāṅkhyayoga, and the marks of the man of wisdom who has attained Brahma, the abode of eternal peace. Verses 27 and 28 deal with the practice of Meditation and its fruit in a nutshell. And finally in verse 29 the chapter is concluded by announcing the highest peace to be the result of knowing God as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the supreme Lord of all the worlds and the disinterested friend of all beings.

Summary of the Chapter

In the third and fourth chapters Arjuna heard from the blessed lips of the Lord the praise of karmayoga in various forms, and received exhortations and injunctions from the Lord to adopt it for practice. He also heard that through the practice of karmayoga, knowledge of the truth relating to God is automatically attained (IV.38) Again, at the end of chapter IV, he received the Lord's command to establish himself in karmayoga, and take up the fight. But now and then he also heard in the course of these instructions words in praise of Jñānayoga, or the Yoga of knowledge, e.g., when the Lord spoke of sacrifice in the form of seeing Brahma in everything or in the form of perception of identity or when He asked Arjuna to attain knowledge by prostrating himself before the wise, and so on. Arjuna, therefore, could not decide which of the two paths was better for him. In order, therefore, to get the point cleared up by the Lord Himself, he says:—

Link of the Discourse

अर्जुन उवाच

सन्न्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम्॥ १॥

कृष्ण O Kṛṣṇa; कर्मणाम् सन्न्यासम् Sāṅkhyayoga or the path of knowledge; च and; पुनः then; (कर्मणाम्) योगम् karmayoga or the path of action; शंससि you extol; एतयोः of these two; यत् which; एकम् one; मे for me; सुनिश्चितम् श्रेयः (is) definitely conducive to (my) good; तत् that; ब्रूहि declare.

Arjuna said Kṛṣṇa, you extol sāṅkhyayoga (the Yoga of knowledge) and then the yoga of Action. Pray tell me which of the two is decidedly conducive to my good. (1)

The root 'kṛṣ' from which the word 'Kṛṣṇa' is derived, means to attract or draw', and the suffix 'na' denotes bliss. The Lord is ever blissful and hence attracts everybody towards Himself. This is the reason of his being called 'Kṛṣṇa'. Here, by addressing the Lord as 'Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna seeks to convey that being the omnipotent and omniscient Lord of the whole creation, He alone is capable of answering his questions. Nowhere in chapter IV has the Lord extolled actual renunciation of actions nor has he ordered Arjuna anywhere to follow this course. On the other hand, He has asked him at several places (IV.15,42) to act in a disinterested way. Hence 'Karmaṇām saṁnyāsam' here does not mean their actual renunciation. To renounce the feeling of doership with respect to all actions and to feel that it is the modes of prakṛti in the shape of the senses that are moving among the modes of prakṛti in the shape of their objects (III.28); to remain constantly established in identity with God, and to see Brahma ever and everywhere: it is this attitude of a Jñānayogī which is referred to here by the word 'Karma saṁnyāsa'. It is this form of Jñānayoga which has been praised in the fourth chapter and Arjuna's query, therefore, relates to this.

Replying to Arjuna, the Lord speaks of 'Saṁnyāsa' and 'Karmayoga' both as leading to the highest good or final beatitude and naming this 'Saṁnyāsa' as 'Sāṅkhya' in the fourth and fifth verses and reverting to the word 'Saṁnyāsa' in the sixth, He makes it clear that by 'Karmasaṁnyāsa' He means Sāṅkhyayoga or Jñānayoga and not the actual renunciation of actions. Besides, according to the Lord, mere renunciation of actions not only does not lead to supreme Bliss (III.4), but is not practisable either (III.5; XVIII.11).

Therefore, 'Karmasaṁnyāsa' here should be taken to mean Jñānayoga and not the actual renunciation of actions.

At first sight it would appear that Arjuna was repeating here the same question which he had already asked at the beginning of Chapter III. But on careful examination it will be found that he did not refer there to 'Jñānayoga' and 'Karmayoga' as such. The question that troubled Arjuna's mind at that time was: If the Lord considered Jñāna or Knowledge as superior to Karma, why should He urge him to engage in a terrible action like warfare ? He was unable to make out the purport of His words which appeared ambiguous; and therefore he wanted to know His mind definitely on this point. The point at issue here is quite different. At this place he neither regards Jñāna as superior to Karma or action nor considers the words of the Lord as ambiguous. He is conscious of the fact that the Lord is praising both 'Jñānayoga'; and 'Karmayoga' (IV.32) and is treating them as separate (III.3). And admitting this fact he seeks to know which of the two is the better course for him. This proves that Arjuna is not repeating here his question of the third chapter.

It is no doubt true that the Lord has commanded Arjuna in clear words to adopt the path of Karmayoga in verse 19 and 30 of Chapter III and verses 15 and 42 of Chapter IV. But it is equally clear that in verses 24 to 30 of Chapter IV the Lord has, under the common name of Yajña or sacrifice, referred to various practices based on Karmayoga and Jñānayoga both, and in that connection extolled Jñānayajña or sacrifice through Knowledge as superior to sacrifice performed with material things (IV.33), and further urged him to take lessons in 'Jñāna' or Knowledge from sages who had seen the reality and glorified such Jñāna (IV.34-35). Again, He clearly stated that through perfection in Karmayoga one automatically attains Knowledge (IV.38). Thus hearing both the paths praised by the Lord, Arjuna could not definitely single out any one course of action for himself. Hence he is quite justified in putting a question like this in order to elicit the definite opinion of the Lord. He wants to know what course he should adopt for attaining true wisdom, whether he should follow the discipline of Knowledge by hearing and pondering over the words of those possessed of real Knowledge, or should take or Karmayoga by performing actions without attachment and in a disinterested way and dedicating them to God ?

Now the Lord proceeds to answer Arjuna's question:—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

सन्न्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसन्न्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते॥ २॥

सन्न्यासः the Yoga of Knowledge; च and; कर्मयोगः the Yoga of Action; उभौ both; निःश्रेयसकरौ (are) conducive to the highest good; तु but; तयोः of the two; कर्मसन्न्यासात् to the Yoga of Knowledge; कर्मयोगः the Yoga of Action; विशिष्यते (is) superior.

Śrī Bhagavān said: The Yoga of Knowledge and the Yoga of Action both lead to supreme Bliss. Of the two, however, the Yoga of Action (being easier of practice) is superior to the Yoga of Knowledge. (2)

The word 'Nyāsa' means renunciation, and with the prefix 'Sam' added to it, it denotes complete renunciation. And renunciation here signifies renunciation of the sense of doership in respect of all activities carried on by mind, speech and body, as well as of identification with the body and the feeling of 'mine' with regard to the objects of the world. The words 'Saṁnyāsa' and 'Saṁnyāsī' have been used in the Gītā in different sense varying according to the context. For instance, 'Saṁnyāsa' denotes dedication of one's actions to God in III. 30, XII.6 and XVIII.57, the abandonment of actions with an interested motive in XVIII.2, mental renunciation of works in V.13, Karmayoga in VI.2, and actual renunciation of bodily activity in III.4 and XVIII.7; while it stands for 'Sāṅkhyayoga' or the Path of Knowledge in V.6 and XVIII.49. Even so a follower of the Path of Action has been referred to as 'Sāṁnyāsī' in VI.1 and XVIII.12, and as 'Sāṁnyāsa-yogayuktātmā' in IX.28. This shows that the Gītā does not use the word 'Saṁnyāsa' in the same sense everywhere. Its meaning varies according to the context. Here the Lord sets out to discuss the comparative merits of 'Sāṅkhyayoga' and 'Karmayoga'. Hence 'Saṁnyāsa' obviously means 'Sāṅkhyayoga'. The Lord has made this abundantly clear by using the word 'Sāṅkhya' itself in the fourth and fifth verses. Therefore, it is but reasonable to take 'Saṁnyāsa' in the sense of 'Sāṅkhyayoga'. here.

The statement that "the Yoga of Knowledge and the Yoga of Action both lead to supreme Bliss" cannot be taken to mean, as some are apt to do, that the two disciplines collectively lead to supreme Bliss and not singly. The reason is that the two disciplines cannot be followed at once by one and the same man. For during his practice the Karmayogī treats his actions, the fruit thereof, God and himself as separate entities and does everything as an offering to the Lord renouncing its fruit as well as attachment for it (III.30; V.10; IX.27-28; XII.10 and XVIII.56-57). The Sāṅkhyayogī, on the other hand, feeling that it is the Guṇas born of Māyā that are moving among the Guṇas (III.28) or in other words that the senses are moving among their objects (V.8-9), renounces the sense of doership in respect of all the activities carried on by mind, speech and body and remains established in identity with the all-pervading oversoul, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. The Karmayogī feels that he is the doer of his own actions (V.11), whereas the Sāṅkhyayogī does not (V.8-9). The Karmayogī dedicates his actions to God (IX.27-28); the Sāṅkhyayogī does not even recognize the operations of the mind and senses carried on without a conscious doer of falling under the category of action (XVIII.17). The Karmayogī views God as separate from Himself (XII.6-7); the Sāṅkhyayogī admits no distinction (XVIII.20). The Karmayogī admits the existence of Prakṛti and its evolutes (XVIII.61); the Sāṅkhyayogī recognizes the existence of none else than the one absolute Reality (XIII.30). The Karmayogī believes in the existence of actions and their fruit; the Sāṅkhyayogī neither recognizes the existence of actions and their fruit as apart from the Absolute nor holds himself related to them in any way. Thus their courses of discipline as well as their outlook are poles asunder. Such being the case, no one can tread both the paths simultaneously. Besides, had it been true that the two disciplines taken together lead to supreme Bliss, it would have been meaningless on the part of Arjuna to ask the Lord to point out any one of them which might be decidedly good for him. Nor would there be any meaning in the Lord's declaring Karmayoga as superior to Sāṅkhyayoga or in His statement that both the Sāṅkhyayogī and the Karmayogī reach

the same destination. Therefore, it is but reasonable to hold the two paths as independent of each other. Though both lead to the same goal, viz; realization of God, the embodiment of supreme Bliss, through real wisdom, yet for a man of action like Arjuna the practice of Karmayoga was easier and hence better than Sāṅkhyayoga.

Although, as stated above, the two disciplines are conducive to supreme Bliss singly and independently of each other, it is not without reason that the Lord declares Karmayoga as superior to Sāṅkhyayoga. In the first place, a Karmayogī is always a Saṁnyāsī or renouncer of actions even though engaged in actions and he gets freed from the bondage of births and deaths very easily without any effort of trouble (V.3). He quickly attains God (V.6); and constantly enjoys His protection (IX.22). And lastly even a little practice of Karmayoga is capable of delivering one from the great fear of birth and death (II.40). The path of Knowledge, on the other hand, is a rugged one and bristling with thorns (XII.5); and it is difficult to tread for one who has not pursued the discipline of Karmayoga in the first instance (V.6). It is for these reasons that Karmayoga has been declared superior to Jñānayoga.

Karmayoga has been declared as superior to Sāṅkhyayoga. In order to establish this very point, the Lord now praises the Karmayogī in the following verse:—

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसन्न्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते॥ ३॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed Arjuna; यः who; न neither; द्वेष्टि hates (anyone); न nor; काङ्क्षति desires; सः he (a Karmayogī); नित्यसन्न्यासी ज्ञेयः should be ever considered a renouncer; हि for; निर्द्वन्द्वः he who is free from the pairs of opposites; सुखम् easily; बन्धात् from bondage; प्रमुच्यते is freed.

The Karmayogī who neither hates nor desires should be ever considered a renouncer. For, Arjuna, he who is free from the pairs of opposites is easily freed from bondage. (3)

The Karmayogī neither hates anybody nor craves for anything wholly transcends the pairs of opposites. In fact, Saṁnyāsa or renunciation too represents the same state. He alone who is free from likes and dislikes is a true Saṁnyāsī; for he is neither required to enter the order of Saṁnyāsīs nor to tread the path of Knowledge. Therefore, by declaring that a Karmayogī should be ever considered a Saṁnyāsī (renouncer), the Lord glorifies him and certifies that he is a renouncer even though performing all actions, and is freed from the bondage of actions without any difficulty or exertion.

Attraction and repulsion are the two most formidable enemies of man retarding his progress on the path of spirituality. It is they who throw him into the bondage of Karma. Subduing these impulses, the Karmayogī acts for the sake of God and through His Grace is easily freed from the bondage of actions.

The latencies of good and evil actions that are rooted in ignorance, and their fruits constitute the bondage of men. Bound by them the embodied soul incessantly goes on revolving in the whirling of births and deaths. Getting beyond this cycle of births and deaths for ever is what is meant by being freed from bondage.

* * *

Establishing the superiority of Karmayoga over Saṅkhyayoga on the ground of its being easier in practice, the Lord now reveals in the following two verses their identity so far as their fruit is concerned, which is nothing short of supreme Bliss as already pointed out in the second verse:—

साङ्ख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ ४ ॥

साङ्ख्ययोगौ the paths of Knowledge and Action (referred to above); बालाः the ignorant (lit., those of unripe intellect); पृथक् yielding different results; प्रवदन्ति declare; न not (so); पण्डिताः the wise; एकम् in one; अपि even; सम्यक् firmly; आस्थितः established; उभयोः of both; फलम् fruit (viz., God-realization); विन्दते obtains.

It is the ignorant, not the wise, who say that Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga lead to divergent results. For one who is firmly established in either gets the fruit of both (which is the same, viz., God-realization). (4)

Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga both are conducive to the attainment of Bliss or final beatitude by bringing a Knowledge of the highest Truth. Notwithstanding this fact, those who believe that they yield divergent results, and distinguish between the two paths on this ground are lacking in wisdom. For even though the Sādhanā in the two disciplines proceeds on different lines they are one and the same so far as their result is concerned.

That the practice of Karmayoga leads to the attainment of final beatitude through the Knowledge of Reality is born out by the following statements of the Lord:—"I confer upon them that Yoga of wisdom through which they attain Me" (X.10); "In order to shower My Grace on them, I dispel the darkness of their heart by the light of Truth" (X.11), "Having attained purity of heart through the practice of Karmayoga, he automatically achieves Realization" (IV.38), etc. But Sāṅkhyayoga itself, they say, is Knowledge of the Reality, how, then, can it be said to bring liberation through a Knowledge of the Reality ?

In this connection it should be borne in mind that Sāṅkhyayoga is not the same as Knowledge of the supreme Reality; it is the name of a path or discipline leading to that Knowledge and pursued in accordance with the teachings of those who have known the Reality. For in verse 24 of Chapter XIII Dhyānayoga (the Yoga of Meditation), Karmayoga (the Yoga of Action) and Sāṅkhyayoga (the Yoga of Knowledge) have been spoken of as separate ways of approach of self-realization, quite independent of one another. Therefore, it is but reasonable to say that Sāṅkhyayoga enables one to attain liberation through a Knowledge of the supreme Reality. Speaking of the path of Knowledge in verses 49 to 55 of Chapter XVIII the Lord says that becoming one with Brahma, which is only another name of attaining perfection in Sāṅkhyayoga, one attains Parā Bhakti or supreme Devotion, which is the same as real Knowledge, and that through Parā Bhakti one realizes and enters into God. This makes it clear that the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga leads to the actual Knowledge of the Reality, which is followed by the attainment of liberation.

An understanding or insight which represents Knowledge of the supreme Reality is known as 'Paṇḍā' and one endowed with such an understanding is called a 'Paṇḍita'. Therefore, perfect souls possessing actual

Knowledge of Reality are here referred to by the word 'Paṇḍitāḥ'.

* * *

Both the disciplines lead to the same end, namely, realization of God through real Knowledge. Hence it is but meet and proper to say that one firmly established in any one of these attains the fruit of both. But it would be meaningless to say so if perfection in Sāṅkhyayoga were the result of Karmayoga, and Sāṅkhyayoga in its turn would lead to the attainment of liberation in the shape of God-realization. In that case the result of the two disciplines would not be the same. For, according to the latter interpretation, one who is firmly established in Sāṅkhyayoga has already achieved (in the shape of perfection in Sāṅkhyayoga) the fruit of Karmayoga. Hence it would be meaningless to say that one firmly established in Sāṅkhyayoga attains the fruit of Karmayoga. Even so if one who is firmly established in Karmayoga attains God-realization only through perfection in Sāṅkhyayoga, he obtains the fruit of Sāṅkhyayoga through Sāṅkhyayoga alone, and not direct. Thus the statement of the Lord that one firmly established in any one of these disciplines obtains the result of both would have no meaning at all. Therefore, the only conclusion that we can draw from this statement is that the two disciplines are independent of each other and they lead to the same end. This interpretation alone gives meaning to the Lord's statement that one firmly established in any one of the two disciplines attains the result of both. In verse 24 of Chapter XIII too the Lord recognizes both as independent means of self-realization.

* * *

It will appear that Arjuna opens the controversy in the very first verse of this chapter by using the words 'Karmasaṁnyāsa' and 'Karmayoga' and the Lord too adopts the same terminology in answering his question in verse 2. But in order to avoid the word 'Karmasaṁnyāsa' being erroneously interpreted as actual renunciation of actions and the word 'Karmayoga' being construed to mean mere activity of any kind, the Lord uses the words 'Sāṅkhya' and 'Yoga' instead and thereby makes it clear that he has used the two words in the sense of the paths of Knowledge and action respectively.

The use of the word 'Api' emphasizes the fact that the two disciplines are altogether independent and can bring God-realization without the help of each other.

यत्साङ्ख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते।
एकं साङ्ख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति॥ ५॥

साङ्ख्यैः by Sāṅkhyayoga; यत् which; स्थानम् state; प्राप्यते is attained; योगैः by Karmayogīs; अपि as well; तत् the same; गम्यते is reached; यः who; साङ्ख्यम् Sāṅkhyayoga; च and; योगम् Karmayoga; एकम् (as) one; पश्यति sees; सः he; च alone; पश्यति sees.

The (supreme) state which is reached by the Sāṅkhyayogī is attained also by the Karmayogī. Therefore, he alone who sees Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga as one (so far as their result goes) really sees. (5)

It has been explained in the commentary on the second verse how Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga are quite independent of each other and how their Sādhanā also proceeds in quite opposite directions. This should not, however, lead anyone to doubt that they lead to the same destination. One can easily understand this by the illustration of the roundness of the earth. A man proceeding to New York in America from India will reach

his destination if he follows the correct route, no matter whether he takes an eastward course or moves in a westerly direction. Even so the Sādhaka is sure to attain God, who is the supreme goal both of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga, if he firmly adheres to one of these two paths, notwithstanding the differences in their courses of discipline.

Having spoken of the common good of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga, the Lord now brings out the superiority of Karmayoga so far as its practice is concerned:—

सन्न्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति॥ ६॥

तु but; महाबाहो O mighty armed Arjuna; अयोगतः without Karmayoga; सन्न्यासः (perfection in) Sāṅkhyayoga; आप्तुम् to attain; दुःखम् (is) difficult; मुनिः one who keeps his mind fixed on God; योगयुक्तः a Karmayogī; ब्रह्म God; नचिरेण in no time; अधिगच्छति reaches.

Without Karmayoga, however, Sāṅkhyayoga (or renunciation of doership in relation to all activities of the mind, senses and body) is difficult to accomplish; whereas the Karmayogī, who keeps his mind fixed on God, reaches Brahma in no time, Arjuna. (6)

The indeclinable 'Tu' points to the peculiarity that though their fruit is identical, yet in practice Sāṅkhyayoga is more difficult than Karmayoga.

One with mighty-arms is called a 'Mahābāhu'. Figuratively the word 'Bāhu' or 'arm' is used for a brother or friend. By addressing Arjuna as 'Mahābāhu', the Lord means to encourage him by conveying that he who has got a brother in pious-minded Yudhiṣṭhira and friend in Him, the supreme Deity, should have no cause for anxiety. The path runs smooth for him in every way.

Although Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga are independent of each other, Karmayoga or the path of Action is comparatively easy, whereas Sāṅkhyayoga or the path of Knowledge is rather rugged and arduous. It is with a view to emphasizing this difference that the Lord says: "Sāṅkhyayoga is difficult to practise without having practised Karmayoga before hand," suppose there is an aspirant who holds that the whole of this phenomenal world is but a dream and unreal: it is falsely superimposed on Brahma, which is the only Reality. At the same time his heart is not pure: the evils of attraction and repulsion, anger and lust, are still present in him. If he makes no attempt to purify his heart and takes to the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga straight off on the mere strength of his intellectual belief, it will not be easy for him to attain perfection in Sāṅkhyayoga as described in verses 11 to 30 of Chapter II and verses 49 to 55 of Chapter XVIII. For so long as there is identification with the body, and attachment for enjoyments, and so long as the Sādhaka feels attracted towards that which is agreeable and recoils from that which is repelling, it will be difficult for him even to grasp the true meaning of Sāṅkhyayoga,—which consists in renouncing the sense of doership in respect of all actions and remaining constantly established in identity with the Absolute and formless Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss,—much more so to tread the path. Besides, his mind being impure and deluded, he will have no faith in God, the controller of the whole universe and the Dispenser of the fruits of actions, nor in heaven and hell and other such rewards and punishments for

one's actions. Consequently he will very likely give up virtuous deeds which involve strenuous effort and may fall an easy prey to the lure of vicious enjoyments due to an attraction for sense objects and other such evils, and be thus lost to the path of Bliss. Therefore, it is essential for a man who holds that Sāṅkhyayoga is the only path to God-realization, to purge his mind of likes and dislikes and other such impurities through the disinterested performance of virtuous deeds like sacrifice, charity, askesis, etc., before he proceeds to tread the path of Knowledge. Only then can his practice of Sāṅkhyayoga be smoothly carried through, and then alone can he achieve success therein easily. It is in this sense that the accomplishment of Saṁnyāsa has been spoken of as difficult without the practice of Karmayoga.

The word 'Yogayuktaḥ' with the adjective 'Muniḥ' stands for the Karmayogī, who considering every thing as belonging to God does not lose his balance of mind in success or in failure and renouncing attachment as well as the desire for fruits performs all his duties in accordance with the Lord's commandments, and with faith and devotion dwells upon the name, virtues, glory and reality of God.

Some people take the word 'Muniḥ' to mean a Sādhaka who has restrained his speech or conquered his senses. Obviously there can be no objection to this interpretation, because a Karmayogī who dwells in his mind upon God's Reality must necessarily be reserved in speech and have control over his senses.

The word 'Brahma' can be taken to mean both God with attributes and the Absolute, because they are just the Same—two aspects of the same Reality.

Now describing the marks of a Karmayogī, the Lord speaks of his remaining unaffected by actions:—

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ ७ ॥

विजितात्मा who has fully conquered his mind; जितेन्द्रियः who has mastered his senses; विशुद्धात्मा whose heart is pure; सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा who has identified his self with the Self of all beings; योगयुक्तः the Karmayogī; कुर्वन् performing action; अपि even; न लिप्यते is not tainted.

The Karmayogī, who has fully conquered his mind and mastered his senses, whose heart is pure, and who has identified himself with the self of all beings (viz, God), remains untainted, even though performing action. (7)

So long as one's mind and senses are not controlled, they naturally run after sense-enjoyments; and so long as impurities in the form of likes and dislikes exist in the mind it is difficult to remain equipoised in success and failure. Hence, until the mind and senses are fully controlled and perfect purity of heart is attained a Sādhaka, cannot be called a real Karmayogī. The adjective 'Yogayuktaḥ', 'Viśuddhātmā', 'Vijitātmā' and 'Jitendriyaḥ' have, therefore, been used to indicate that he alone is Karmayogī in whom all these virtues reside, and he alone realizes Brahma without delay.

God is the real Self of all beings from Brahmā, the creator, down to the tiniest blade of grass. Therefore, he who regards God as his Self *i.e.*, the Inner Controller and performs all his actions according to His promptings and guidance and who has no

sense of 'mine' with regard to the body, mind intellect or any other thing except God is referred to here by the word 'Sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā'.

The Sāṅkhyayogī does not consider himself to be the doer of any action. Notwithstanding the fact that his mind, intellect and senses continue to perform all actions, he does not associate himself with any of those activities, but only feels that it is the modes of Prakṛti that are moving among themselves and that he has nothing to do with them. Such being the case, it is but meet and proper that he should remain untainted by actions, but the wonder of wonders is that the Karmayogī too; who regards himself as a doer, is not bound by actions though performing them for the sake of God and according to His directions. The indeclinable 'Api' has been used to reveal this speciality of the Karmayogī.

Referring briefly in verse 2 to the identity of the fruits of Karmayoga and Sāṅkhyayoga, the former was declared superior to the latter because of its being easier in practice. Again, praising the Karmayogī in the third, the identity of their fruits and their being independent of each other were fully dealt with in the fifth and sixth verses. Pointing out in the first half of verse 6 that Sāṅkhyayoga is difficult to accomplish without Karmayoga, the latter was declared to be easy of practice in the second half. This was followed by a reference to the marks of a Karmayogī in the seventh. It has thus been made clear that in spite of their fruit being the same, the two paths are different from each other. Hearing this one should naturally desire to know the distinctive character of both. Anticipating this, the Lord first proceeds to describe in verses 8 and 9 the attitude of a Sāṅkhyayogī while moving in the world:—

नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित्।
पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्श्वसन् ॥ ८ ॥
प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ९ ॥

तत्त्ववित् who knows the reality; युक्तः the Sāṅkhyayogī; पश्यन् seeing; शृण्वन् hearing; स्पृशन् touching; जिघ्रन् smelling; अश्नन् eating or drinking; गच्छन् moving or walking; स्वपन् sleeping; श्वसन् breathing; प्रलपन् speaking; विसृजन् answering the calls of nature; गृह्णन् grasping (something); उन्मिषन् opening the eyes; निमिषन् closing the eyes; अपि even; इन्द्रियाणि the organs of sense and action; इन्द्रियार्थेषु among the objects of senses; वर्तन्ते are moving; इति thus; धारयन् holding; एव undoubtedly; इति so; मन्येत should think (that); किञ्चित् न nothing; करोमि I do.

The Sāṅkhyayogī, however, who knows the reality of things, must believe, even though seeing hearing, touching, smelling, eating or drinking walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking answering the calls of nature, grasping and opening or closing the eyes, that he does nothing, holding that it is the senses that are moving among their objects. (8,9)

The whole of this phenomenal world is ephemeral and transient, hence illusory like a mirage or the dreamworld. It is superimposed through ignorance on Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, who alone is real. Thus distinguishing

between the real and the unreal, he who remains constantly established in identity with the Absolute formless aspect of God, the supreme Reality—he alone is a 'Tattvavit' and a 'Yukta'. These two adjectives have been used to represent the true character of a Sādhaka following the path of Knowledge.

* * *

A man awakened from a dream knows that the actions which appeared to him as being performed by his body, mind the vital airs and senses during the dream state were neither actually performed nor was he in any way connected with them. Even so the Sāṅkhyayogī, who knows the reality of things and remains constantly established in identity with the Immutable and Actionless Brahma, should, while performing the various functions of seeing, hearing etc. feel that it is the mind, the vital airs and the senses (which are all illusory by nature) that are moving among their respective objects, which are equally illusory; in fact, nothing is actually happening nor is he connected with any of these in any way. Here it may be contended that even those who are not yet free from likes and dislikes, anger and lust, and other such evils, but at the same time pose as Sāṅkhyayogīs, can argue that they are in no way connected with whatever actions- good or bad, that are being performed by their mind and senses. How are we to distinguish a genuine Sāṅkhyayogī from a bogus one ? In this connection it should be remembered that by mere profession one does not actually become a Sāṅkhyayogī nor can one cease to have any connection with one's actions. In the eyes of the true and genuine Sāṅkhyayogī, the whole of this phenomenal world is illusory like a dream; therefore, he ceases to have any attraction for anything in this world. Attraction and repulsion altogether disappear from his mind and no trace is left in him of evils like lust, anger, greed, infatuation, egoism and so on. So there being no incentive to prohibited actions, every activity of his unsullied mind and senses has the sanction of the scriptures and redounds to the common weal. That is the test of a true Sāṅkhyayogī. So long as a follower of the path of Knowledge finds the least trace of attraction and repulsion or lust and anger in his heart, he should consider his practice faulty.

* * *

There are no hard and fast rules regarding the form of activity which a Sāṅkhyayogī engages in. Due to differences of caste, stage in life, temperament, nature of the past Karma responsible for birth, association and habit, the activities of all Sāṅkhyayogīs are not of a uniform nature. The five participles 'seeing', 'hearing', 'touching', 'smelling' and 'eating' refer to the functions of all the five organs of sense, viz., the eye, the ear, the tactile sense, the nose and the palate respectively. 'walking', 'grasping' and 'speaking' denote the functions of the feet, hands and tongue (speech) respectively, and 'answering the calls of nature' covers the functions of the organs of reproduction and defecation. 'Breathing' points to the function of the five vital airs. Even so, 'opening' and 'closing' of the eyes represent the functions of the five outer winds of the body known as 'Kūrma' etc., and finally 'sleeping' denotes the functions of the inner sense or mind. In this way, reference to the activities of all the senses, vital airs and the inner sense shows that according to his order in society, stage in life, nature, past Karma and association a Sāṅkhyayogī can perform all actions approved of by the scriptures, such as eating and drinking, carrying on business, preaching, reading and writing, hearing, thinking, etc. for the maintenance of his body or for the common weal.

* * *

Verse 28 of Chapter III says that "It is the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti that move among the Guṇas;" verse 29 of Chapter XIII speaks of all actions being done by Prakṛti or Nature; whereas in this verse it is stated that "the senses are moving among their objects'. All these statements point to the same conclusion. The senses as well as their objects are products of the three Guṇas, and Guṇas in their turn are evolutes of Prakṛti. Therefore, it is just the same to say that Prakṛti is the doer of all actions, or that the Guṇas are moving among the Guṇas or the senses are moving among their objects. The same thing has been expressed in three different ways in different context just in order to lay special emphasis on this point.

It is noteworthy in this connection that even though the activities of the vital airs as well as of the mind have been mentioned in this verse along with the functions of the senses, the Lord urges on the Sāṅkhyayogī to believe that it is the senses that are moving among their objects in each case. The reason is not far to seek. In all forms of activity it is the senses that play the predominant part. The vital airs too have been referred to as the senses. And being the inner sense, mind as well is one of them. The word 'Indriya' thus covers all, viz., the mind as well as the vital airs.

The indeclinable 'Eva' has been used to denote complete absence of the sense of doership with regard to action. The intention is to show that the Sāṅkhyayogī should never and not in the least degree consider himself to be the doer of actions.

Having thus described the course of discipline to be followed by a Sāṅkhyayogī the Lord now proceeds to describe in the next two verses the course of discipline for Karmayogīs along with its fruit.

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा॥ १०॥

यः who; **कर्माणि** (all) actions; **ब्रह्मणि** to God; **आधाय** offering; **सङ्गम्** attachment; **त्यक्त्वा** shaking off; **करोति** acts; **सः** he; **अम्भसा** (remains untouched) by water; **पद्मपत्रम्** the lotus leaf; **इव** as; **पापेन** by sin; **न लिप्यते** remains untouched.

He who acts offering all actions to God, and shaking off attachment, remains untouched by sin, as the lotus leaf by water. (10)

Practising devotion to God, offering worship to the deities, rendering service to parents and other elders, performing sacrifice, practising charity and askesis and performing all other duties prescribed by the scriptures, such as eating drinking etc., carried on for the maintenance of the body, and vocations of life pursued for earning one's livelihood according to one's order in society and stage in life: all these are covered by the word 'Karmāṇi'. And he who performs them all for the sake of God and according to His injunction and desire, and under His guidance and inspiration as a mere puppet, without the least attachment for them and regarding everything as belonging to God, is said to have offered all his actions to God.

The word 'attachment (Saṅgam) here means the attachment one bears for one's wife, progeny, wealth, house and all other objects of enjoyment, for heaven and other higher world attained hereafter, for one's own body and all one's actions and for

abstract things such as honour, fame and prestige etc.

* * *

As a rule, the Karmayogī performing only such actions as are prescribed by the scriptures never commits a sin; under these circumstances there can be no fear of his being contaminated by sin. Why, then, has it been thought necessary to add that he is not contaminated by sin ? The reason for this is that prescribed actions too are not absolutely stainless. Every activity involves the perpetration of sin in one form or other through destruction of life unavoidably and involuntarily caused. That is why the Lord says elsewhere that "all undertakings, indeed, are involved in sin, even as fire in smoke" (XVIII.48). Therefore, he who acts under the impulse of attachment and the desire for fruit simply for enjoyment and bodily comfort can never avoid sin. It is desire and attachment which lead to bondage. Hence, it is but reasonable to say that he who is free from all traces of attachment and desire is not tainted by sins even though performing actions.

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि।
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये॥ ११॥

योगिनः the Karmayogīs; **केवलैः** free from the feeling of 'mine'; **इन्द्रियैः** with (their) senses; **मनसा** with (their) mind; **बुद्ध्या** with (their) intellect; **कायेन** with (their) body; **अपि** alone; **सङ्गम्** attachment; **त्यक्त्वा** shaking off; **आत्मशुद्धये** for the sake of self-purification; **कर्म** action; **कुर्वन्ति** perform.

The Karmayogīs perform action only with their senses, mind, intellect and body as well, withdrawing the feeling of mine in respect of them and shaking off attachment, simply for the sake of self-purification. (11)

Here the adjective 'Kevalaiḥ' denotes absence of the feeling of 'mine'. Even though it qualifies 'Indriyaiḥ' alone, it should be taken by implication to qualify 'Manasā', 'Buddhyā' and 'Kāyena' as well. The intention is to show that a Karmayogī does not entertain the feeling of 'mine' in respect of the mind, intellect, body and senses; he considers them as belonging to God. And he performs all his duties in an absolutely unselfish and disinterested spirit, acting under the inspiration and guidance of God, just like an instrument.

It may be asked here: "In the very last verse the Lord spoke of the man who, offering all actions to God, works in a detached spirit; and he talks of the same detachment in the present verse as well. Does this not amount to tautology on the part of the Lord ? Our reply to this question is that in verse 10 the Lord referred to the Karmayogī in whom the element of Devotion preponderates, whereas in the present verse He talks of the Karmayogī who is predominantly a man of action. Just as in verses 8 and 9 the Lord described how and in what spirit the mind, intellect, sense, vital airs and body of a Sāṅkhyayogī acted, in the present verse He tells us how and in what spirit the Karmayogī who is predominantly a man of action works. Thus there is no tautology here.

The statement that a Karmayogī who performs his actions in the above manner is not touched by sin but attains purity of heart, raises the question whether the practice of Karmayoga leads only to purification of the heart or brings some higher reward as

well and where lies the harm if one performs noble actions with an interested motive instead. Therefore, in order to throw light on this question the Lord now says:—

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम्।
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते॥ १२॥

युक्तः the karmayogī; कर्मफलम् the fruit of actions; त्यक्त्वा offering (to God); नैष्ठिकीम् शान्तिम् everlasting peace (in the shape of God-realization); आप्नोति attains; अयुक्तः he who works with a selfish motive; कामकारेण through desire; फले to the fruit; सक्तः attached; निबध्यते gets tied down.

Offering the fruit of actions to God, the Karmayogī attains everlasting peace in the shape of God-realization; whereas he who works with a selfish motive, being attached to the fruit of actions through desire, gets tied down. (12)

In verse 8, the word 'Yuktaḥ' was interpreted to mean a Sāṅkhyayogī. But here it has been taken in the sense of a 'Karmayogī'; for, as shown above, the meaning of a word varies according to the context. It will be found that the word 'Yuktaḥ' has been used in the Gītā in different senses in various contexts. It is derived from the root 'Yuj', which means 'to join'. In verse 61 of Chapter II, 'Yukta' has been used in the sense of one who has collected and composed one's mind. In verse 8 of Chapter VI, it stands for one who has known the Truth and realized God; in verse 17, being used in connection with diet and recreation, it signifies 'regulatedness', and in verse 18 it conveys the idea of a 'Yogī' practising meditation. In verse 22 of Chapter VII, occurring with the word 'faith', it carries the sense of 'endowed with'. Even so in verse 8 of this chapter it has been used in the sense of a Sāṅkhyayogī. Having been used with reference to an illumined soul who holds that it is the senses which are moving among their respective objects and considers himself above all actions, it has been rightly interpreted to mean a 'Sāṅkhyayogī there. But here it has been used with reference to one who has renounced the fruit of all one's actions; therefore, here it must be taken to mean a 'Karmayogī'.

Derived from the word 'Niṣṭhā', the adjective 'Naiṣṭhikī' means 'born of Niṣṭhā' or perfection in a particular discipline. Therefore, the words 'Naiṣṭhikī Śāntiḥ' have been rightly interpreted to mean God-realization achieved through perfection in Karmayoga.

The word 'Ayuktaḥ' ordinarily carries the sense of an idler or a careless or slothful person. Here, however, it has been used with reference to one who is attached to the fruit of actions through desire; hence it has been rightly interpreted as one who works with an interested motive.

'Bondage' here is nothing else than being born again and again in the various orders of creation as a result of actions performed with an interested motive.

Here it has been stated that the Karmayogī remains untainted by his actions and attains peace in the shape of God-realization, whereas the man who works with an interested motive gets into bondage in the shape of birth and death. But the picture of the Sāṅkhyayogī was left incomplete. Taking up the broken thread again, the Lord now proceeds to describe the state of the Sāṅkhyayoga.

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा सन्न्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन्॥ १३॥

वशी the self-controlled; देही man (the Sāṅkhyayogī); न neither; कुर्वन् doing; न nor; एव indeed; कारयन् getting done by others; नवद्वारे पुरे to the house of nine gates in the shape of this body; सर्वकर्माणि all actions; मनसा mentally; सन्न्यस्य relegating; सुखम् happily; आस्ते rests (in God, embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss).

The self-controlled Sāṅkhyayogī, doing nothing himself and getting nothing done by others, rests happily in God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, mentally relegating all actions to the mansion of nine gates (the body with nine openings). (13)

Although a Sāṅkhyayogī, as judged by his own viewpoint, ceases to have any connection with the body, mind and senses, and remains constantly established in identity with God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, still, in the eyes of the world, he is no more than one encased in a mortal body. Hence he has been called a 'Dehī'. The same word has been used in verse 20 of Chapter XIV also with reference to one who has risen above the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti. And the Sāṅkhyayogī has been called a 'Vaśī' (self-controlled) because from the worldly point of view the activities of his mind, intellect, and senses are regulated according to the injunctions of the scriptures and conducive to the interests of the world order.

The Sāṅkhyayogī no longer identifies himself with the body and the senses nor regards them as his own; therefore, he neither claims the doership of actions performed by them nor holds himself even indirectly responsible for them. And the indeclinable 'Eva' has been used to emphasize this point.

It is contended by some that according to the principle of contiguity the words 'Nevadvāre Pure' ought to have been connected with the verb 'Āste' rather than with the words preceding it. The sentence should, therefore, read: "Having mentally relinquished all actions the Sāṅkhyayogī exists in the body of nine gates..." It is, however, no compliment to a Sāṅkhyayogī to say that he resides in the body. In fact, it detracts from his worth. Every Tom, Dick and Harry resides in the body. It is a truism which need not be affirmed of a Sāṅkhyayogī. The glory of a Sāṅkhyayogī lies in relegating actions to the body, that is to say, to material objects like the senses and so on. Only a Sāṅkhyayogī can do so; the average man cannot. Hence the prose order that has been adopted is quite correct.

The nine cavities of the human body referred to as nine gates in this verse are: a pair of eyes, a pair of ears, a pair of nostrils and a mouth—all located in the head or uppermost part of the human body, and the organs of reproduction and defecation situated in the lowest extremity of the trunk. Being the seats of four out of five senses of perception and three out of the five organs of action, these nine cavities represent the ten Indriyas; and hence relegating actions to the body of these nine gates is equivalent to relegating the functions of the ten Indriyas to the Indriyas themselves. Being the seat of all the ten Indriyas as well as the mind, the body too denotes the aggregate of all the instruments of action. Hence the Lord simply reiterates in this verse what He stated in verses 8 and 9 above. Only He has adopted

a changed phraseology in order to heighten the effect. In verses 8 and 9 He named the activities of the senses, whereas here He has referred to the seats of those senses. That is all the difference. There is, however, no difference in the sense.

*   *   *

Actually renouncing all forms of activity one cannot even carry on one's existence. Therefore, a Sāṅkhyayogī's renunciation is only mental, a renunciation through the faculty of discrimination and reasoning of doership as well as of instrumentality in respect of all actions. It is in order to bring out this idea clearly that the verb 'Saṁnyasya' has been qualified by the word 'Manasā'.

*   *   *

Although the text simply says that the Sāṅkhyayogī rests (Dehī Āste) and makes no mention of the resting place, the verb 'rests' requires a complement in the form of a locative. According to the established canons of exegesis it is a common practice among commentators to supply ellipses by means of words implied in the text. Here the subject of discussion is a Sāṅkhyayogī; and a Sāṅkhyayogī as a matter of fact can rest happily in God alone; the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, and nowhere else. It is therefore, that the words 'in God' have been added after 'rests' in the translation.

One may ask here: If the self is neither the doer of actions nor does it prompt the senses etc., to act, how is it, then, that all men regard themselves as the doer and also reap the fruit of their actions ?

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥ १४ ॥

प्रभुः God; न neither; लोकस्य of men; कर्तृत्वम् doership; न nor; कर्माणि the doings; न nor even; कर्मफलसंयोगम् contact with the fruit of actions; सृजति determines; तु but; स्वभावः Nature (alone); प्रवर्तते functions.

God determines not the doership nor the doings of men, nor even their contact with the fruit of actions; but it is Nature alone that functions. (14)

The word 'Prabhuḥ' in this verse denotes the almighty God, the creator, preserver and destroyer of the whole creation. The scriptures, wherever they speak of God as responsible for the creation etc., of the universe, refer only to God with attributes.

By declaring that God determines not the doership of man the Lord seeks to convey that the doership of men with reference to their actions is not ordained by God. Under the spell of egotism the ignorant regard themselves as the doer (III.27). To be more explicit, God does not preordain that one must perform a certain good or evil act; for in that case the injunctions and interdictions of the scriptures would become futile and meaningless. By declaring that God does not bring about the contact of men with the fruit of their actions either, the Lord signifies that through ignorance men associate themselves with their actions, some by assuming their doership through attachment and others by getting attached to their fruits.

Had these been predetermined by God, it would become impossible for man to shake off the bondage of karma and there would be no chance for his deliverance. A striver would, therefore, do well to dissociate himself from his actions by

resigning them in the aforesaid manner either to Nature (V.8-9) or to God (V.10) again by wholly renouncing the fruit of his actions as well as attachment. This is what is meant by the statement of the Lord that "God determines not the doership nor the doings of men, nor even their contact with the fruit of actions."

It has been stated above that the soul has nothing to do with the doership of actions and has no connection either with the actions or their fruit. And the present verse says that God too determines not the doership of actions and so on. The question, therefore naturally arises: How are they to be accounted for ? To answer this question the Lord says that all this is being done by Prakṛti, or nature, appearing in the form of its three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—all morbid feelings such as likes and dislikes etc., and good and evil actions and their latencies. All Jīvas who have not risen above it have been united with it from time without beginning. That is why they are possessed of the sense of doership, that is to say, deluded by egoism they come to regard themselves as the doer (III.27); and that is why they are associated with their actions as well as with their fruits and get bound by them. In reality, however, the soul has got nothing to do with these. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the statement that "It is Nature which functions."

Here it may be asked: Does the Lord Himself reap the fruit of the good and evil actions of the striver who has dissociated himself from the fruits of his actions by offering them as well as his actions to the Lord ? The Lord meets this question in the following verse:—

नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं ते मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः॥ १५॥

विभुः the omnipresent Lord; **न** not; **कस्यचित्** of anyone; **पापम्** sin; **च** and; **न** not; **सुकृतम्** virtue; **एव** either; **आदत्ते** receives; **अज्ञानम्** in ignorance; **ज्ञानम्** Knowledge; **आवृतम्** (is) enveloped; **तेन** thereby; **जन्तवः** beings; **मुह्यन्ति** are falling a prey to delusion.

The omnipresent God does not receive the virtue or sin of anyone. Knowledge is enveloped in ignorance; hence it is that beings are constantly falling a prey to delusion. (15)

The word "Vibhuḥ" stands here for God Almighty with attributes but devoid of form, residing in the heart of all (XIII.17; XV.15; XVIII.61) and controlling the operations of the whole world by His will. The statement of the Lord that "God does not receive the virtue or sin of anyone" is intended to convey that even though all actions are performed by men through His energy,—in other words, it is He who endows men with energy, intelligence and senses etc., according to their past Karma,—He does not receive the actions performed by them. In other words, He does not reap their fruit Himself.

It may be contended here that in the last verse of this very chapter as well as in the twenty-fourth verse of Chapter IX, The Lord Himself says that He is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities. How are we to reconcile those statements with that contained in this verse ? It should be noted in this connection that the whole universe is a manifestation of God with

attributes. Hence it is God Himself who enjoys all sacrifices in the form of divinities. Nevertheless, in reality God has nothing to do with our actions or their fruit. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the statement that God does not receive the virtue or sin of anyone. The idea is that even though enjoying all sacrifices in the form of gods and men, and though accepting articles and actions offered by devotees. He is really unconnected with them in the same way as He is unborn though accepting birth (IV.6) and remains a non-doer though performing the functions of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe (IV.13). Hence it is but reasonable to say that God does not receive the virtues of anyone.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः।
तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम्॥ १६॥

तु but; येषाम् whose; तत् that; अज्ञानम् ignorance; आत्मनः of God; ज्ञानेन by true Knowledge; नाशितम् (has been) set aside; तेषाम् theirs; ज्ञानम् (that) Knowledge; आदित्यवत् like the sun; तत् that; परम् the supreme; प्रकाशयति reveals.

In the case, however, to those whose said ignorance has been set aside by true Knowledge of God, that wisdom shining like the sun reveals the supreme. (16)

Verse 15 spoke of Jīvas being deluded by ignorance. The indeclinable 'Tu' has been used here to differentiate the Self-realized souls from the common run of men who are thus deluded. That is to say, those whose ignorance has been driven away by true Knowledge of God, attained through the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga, are not so deluded.

As the sun, dispelling darkness, reveals the true nature of all objects, even so Knowledge dispels ignorance and reveals the true nature of God. In other words, those who have attained real Knowledge never and in no circumstance fall a victim to delusion. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the analogy of the sun.

It has been stated above that true Knowledge leads to God-realization. Now, with a view to revealing up to verse 26 the processes of God-realization through Jñānayoga and the characteristics, conduct, greatness and mental state of God-realized souls, the Lord in the first instance speaks below of the attainment of God through the exclusive practice of Jñānayoga:—

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः।
गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः॥ १७॥

तद्बुद्धयः whose intellect is wholly merged in Him; तदात्मानः whose mind is merged in Him; तन्निष्ठाः who are constantly established in identity with Him; तत्परायणाः (and) who have become one with Him; ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः whose sins have been wiped out by wisdom; अपुनरावृत्तिम् the state whence there is no return; गच्छन्ति attain.

Those whose mind and intellect are wholly merged in Him, who remain constantly established in identity with Him, and have finally become one with Him, their sins being wiped out by wisdom, reach the state whence there is no return. (17)

A follower of the path of Knowledge should come to realize, through the teachings of the scriptures and the preceptor, that the whole world is but illusory and that God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, is the only reality. He should then give up all thoughts of material objects, and in order to rest his mind firmly in God should meditate on his blissful aspect. Revolving the idea of bliss again and again in his mind, he should bring home to it the fact that everywhere there is joy and joy alone—perfect joy, boundless joy, tranquil joy, solid joy, steady joy, constant joy, everlasting joy, conscious joy, joy which is identical with wisdom, supreme joy, great joy, unending joy, unthinkable joy, spiritual joy, nothing but joy. By constantly reflecting on this truth when the mind rests firmly in identity with God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, it is said to have wholly merged in Him.

On the mind being thus merged in God, the truth about God is brought home to the intellect as vividly as though directly perceived. When by constant meditation on this truth so ascertained the intellect loses its identity and becomes one with God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, it is said to have wholly merged in Him.

Mind and intellect are the principal factors that draw an imaginary line between the soul and the oversoul. Therefore, until the mind and intellect are wholly merged in Him in the aforesaid manner the Sāṅkhyayogī is unable to identify himself with God. On the mind and intellect being merged in Him as stated above, the Sādhaka is rid of the delusion that differentiates between the soul and the oversoul, and the tripartite consciousness of meditator, the object meditated upon and the process of meditation disappear, so that there remains God alone, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. This is what is meant by establishing oneself in identity with God.

When the delusion that differentiates between the soul and the oversoul has been got rid of in the manner described above, and the Sāṅkhyayogī is firmly established in identity with God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, nothing remians in his consciousness as matter of fact, except God. His mind, intellect, vital airs, etc., all become one with God. The word "Tatparāyaṇāḥ", therefore, denotes such men as have actually become one with God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, by directly perceiving Him.

In the previous verse 'Tat' has been used as an adjective qualifying 'Param' the Supreme. A demonstrative pronoun always refers to the noun immediately preceding it; hence the pronoun 'Tat' forming part of the compound words 'Tadbuddhayaḥ' etc., occurring in this verse, naturally refers to the supreme Reality which has been stated in that verse to be revealed by true Knowledge. Therefore, with due regard to the context the word has been correctly interpreted as God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

The word Jñāna forming part of the compound word 'Jñānanirdhūtakalmaṣāḥ' denotes the true Knowledge of Reality which has been referred to in the foregoing verse as driving away ignorance and revealing God. 'Kalmaṣa' (lit., a sin), forming part of the same word, includes the latencies of one's past action, both good and evil, and evils like partiality and prejudice, distraction and obscurity. All these, being responsible for throwing the soul into bondage, are really sins, 'Nirdhūta' implies their complete annihilation. Therefore, the word 'Jñānanirdhūtakalmaṣāḥ' shows that the true Knowledge of Reality obtained through the aforesaid course of discipline,

consisting of merging the mind etc., in God and so on, wipes out one's sins accumulated in the shape of impurities, distraction and obscurity of the mind, leaving no trace of them behind.

The word 'Apunarāvṛttim' refers to God; on reaching whom one does not return to this mortal world even as a man who has awakened from a dream ceases to have any connection with the world there of, and who has been spoken of as 'Tat Param' in the preceding verse and has been variously termed in the Gītā as 'Akṣaya Sukha' (eternal Bliss), 'Nirvāṇa Brahma' (Brahma who is all peace), 'Uttama Sukha' (the highest Bliss), "Paramā Gati' (the supreme Goal), 'Parama Dhāma' (the supreme Abode) 'Avyaya Pada' (the immortal abode) and 'Divya Paramapuruṣa' (the supreme Divine Puruṣa) and who is realized through true Knowledge.

Having stated the means of God-realization, the Lord now proceeds to describe the undifferentiating attitude of God-realized souls:—

विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ १८ ॥

पण्डिताः the wise; विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने endowed with learning and culture; ब्राह्मणे on a Brāhmaṇa; च and; गवि on a cow; हस्तिनि on an elephant; शुनि on a dog; च and; श्वपाके on a pariah; एव too; समदर्शिनः look with the same eye.

The wise look with the same eye on a Brāhmaṇa endowed with learning and culture, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a pariah too. (18)

The word 'Paṇḍitāḥ' here denotes high-souled men of perfection who have realized the Truth. All distinctions disappear from the mind of saints who have realized the Truth. In their eyes nothing exists except God, the supreme Reality, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. Therefore, he sees one uniform existence everywhere. In order to explain this sense of unity in diversity, examples have been judiciously picked up from diverse orders of creation. A learned and cultured Brāhmaṇa represents the best specimen of humanity, whereas a Śvapāka (a pariah living on the flesh of dogs) occupies the lowest rank in society. Even so the cow, the elephant and the dog respectively represent the highest, the middle and the lowest types among the quadrupeds. Everybody has to observe a distinction in his dealings with all these. For instance, all take cow's milk, but none would have the milk of a bitch. Similarly, an elephant can be used for riding purposes but a dog cannot. That which serves as good food for the animals may not always be fit for human consumption. The scriptures enjoin that a good Brāhmaṇa should be respected and adored, but prescribe no such thing in respect of a pariah. Therefore by means of these varied examples, it has been clearly brought out that the Knower of Reality looks with the same eye even on those in dealing with whom distinction must need be observed in life. Never and on no account does the feeling of diversity enter his mind.

But this does not mean that a wise man observes no distinction in his dealings with different persons or objects. In fact, such a thing is not possible. Distinction must be observed in one's dealings with all up to a resonable limit as prescribed by the scriptures. A wise man does observe in his dealings all such distinctions as are necessary and proper in the eyes of the world. He

will treat a Brāhmaṇa even as a Brāhmaṇa should be treated and will deal with the pariah as one ought to do; even so he will use a cow, an elephant and a dog as well in a befitting way. Nevertheless he percieves God alike in everybody and bears the same love towards all. A man does not behave with the various members of his own body, such as the head, the hands and the feet, in the same way and observes the same distinction between them as between the four orders of society, viz., a Brāhmaṇ, a Kṣatirya, a Vaiśya and a Śūdra. He does not put his hands and feet to the same use as his head and mouth, nor does he take the same work from his head as from his hands and feet; nay he does not show the same amount of regard and attention to all his limbs and his method of cleaning them also differs. Nevertheless he regards them all as equally his own; hence he feels their ease or pain alike and bears the same amount of love for the whole body. His love for and the feeling of 'mine' with regard to the different parts of his body know no distinction. Even so the exalted soul who has realized the Truth, sees God everywhere; hence even though observing due distinction in his dealings from the point of view of the world, he loves and identifies himself with all in an equal degree. And therefore, just as on a particular limb of one's body being hurt or likely to be hurt one tries to heal it or ward off the impending danger to it, even so when a particular individual or a group or individuals is in distress the wise man will duly try to remove their distress during his active life.

Having thus described the sense of unity possessed by a seer, the Lord now declares that unity is the same as God, and glorifies those who are established in unity:—

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ १९ ॥

येषाम् whose; मनः mind; साम्ये in unity; स्थितम् is established; तैः by those; इह एव even here, in this very life; सर्गः the mortal plane; जितः is conquered; हि for; ब्रह्म the Absolute; निर्दोषम् is untouched by evil; समम् knows no distinction; तस्मात् hence; ते they; ब्रह्मणि in the Eternal; स्थिताः (are) established.

Even here is the mortal plane conquered by those whose mind is established in unity; since the Absolute is untouched by evil and knows no distinction, hence they are established in the Eternal. (19)

Those who see unity every where are said to have been established in unity. This perception of unity in diversity frees them from the bondage of birth and death in this very life. That is to say, even though they carry on their mundane existence in the eyes of the world, they cease to have any connection with their body, and hence with everything else in this world. This is what is meant by the conquest of the mortal plane.

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—all these modes of Prakṛti are fraught with evils of every kind and the whole world being a product of these, is full of evils. All evils in the shape of partiality and prejudice, infatuation and the sense of diversity etc., make their appearance due to contact with these Guṇas. God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, is altogether free from these Guṇas. Hence, He is free from blemish and knows no distinction. In the

same way, the knower of reality too transcends these three Guṇas. Hence he is completely rid of all evils in the shape of likes and dislikes, infatuation, the sense of possession, egoism etc., and gets established in unity. The words 'Hi' and 'Tasmāt' have been used to signify that unity is a symbol of the Absolute. Hence those whose mind rests in unity are actually established in the Absolute. Though in the eyes of the world they appear as existing in the world made up of the three Guṇas and the body, yet, as a matter of fact, being established in unity, they have no connection with this world made up of the three Guṇas or with the body. They exist in the Absolute alone.

It may be contended here that it is quite reasonable to speak of Rajas and Tamas as the abode of all evils; for at several places in the Gītā they are declared as responsible for all mischief and the Sādhaka is enjoined again and again to get rid of them. But the quality of Sattva is helpful in realizing God; how is it that the Lord treats it on the same footing as the other two qualities and calls it the abode of evil ? In this connection it may be submitted that the quality of Sattva is no doubt superior to Rajas and Tamas and is also helpful in the uplift of man; yet, being associated with egoistic pleasure and Knowledge, it has been declared by the Lord as instrumental in bringing about bondage (XIV.6). In fact, without being completely rid of all the three Guṇas, a Sādhaka cannot be declared as absolutely free from blemish and cannot be wholly established in unity. Hence while speaking of those who have transcended the three Guṇas, it is not unreasonable to declare Sattvaguṇa too as full of evil.

The Lord now proceeds to describe the marks of a sage who has attained the Absolute and Formless Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, and has consequently lost all sense of diversity:—

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम्।
स्थिरबुद्धिरसम्मूढो ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः॥ २०॥

प्रियम् what is pleasing; प्राप्य obtaining; न not; प्रहृष्येत् (who) rejoices; च and; अप्रियम् the unpleasant; प्राप्य obtaining; न not; उद्विजेत् feels perturbed; स्थिरबुद्धिः endowed with firm reason; असम्मूढः free from doubt; ब्रह्मवित् the knower of Brahma; ब्रह्मणि in Brahma; स्थितः exists.

He who, with reason firm and free from doubt, rejoices not on obtaining what is pleasant and does not feel perturbed on meeting with the unpleasant, that knower of Brahma lives eternally in identity with Brahma. (20)

Things which are agreeable to the mind, intellect, senses and body are called 'pleasing'. The ignorant suffer from attachment for such things and feel delighted on obtaining them. The knower of Reality, however, being established in unity, does not feel the least attachment for anything. Hence he does not rejoice on coming in contact, as a result of some good action done in the past, with anything which is agreeable to the mind, intellect, senses and body. For he has altogether ceased to identify himself with, or entertain the feeling of possession or attachment with regard to all these. Even so things which are disagreeable to the mind, intellect, senses and body are known as 'unpleasant', and the ignorant entertain a feeling of aversion for such things. That is why they get upset and feel very miserable on coming in contact with them. But the

knower of Reality is absolutely free from aversion. Hence he does not feel perturbed or miserable even on coming in contact with that which is most disagreeable to his mind, senses and body.

In the eyes of the sage who has realized the Truth nothing is real in this world except the one Absolute. Therefore, his intellect is ever steady and firm. Even when he is confronted in the eyes of the world with honour and ignominy, or joy and sorrow of various kinds, his intellect is never shaken from its stability in the Absolute. It remains ever and under all circumstances immovably fixed in the Absolute, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

The use of the word 'Asammūḍhaḥ' signifies that the mind of the wise man is absolutely free from doubts, errors and infatuation. All his doubts disappear along with their root, viz., ignorance.

The word 'Brahmavit' denotes one who has attained full Knowledge of the reality of Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. Such a 'Brahmavit' comes to know every thing not only about Brahma but also about the world, the relation of the world with Brahma, the soul and the Oversoul, the difference between the individual soul and God, and so on. Nothing about Brahma remains to be known by him who has come face to face with the Reality.

Such a knower of Brahma remains constantly established in Brahma all the time, no matter whether he is awake, dreaming or fast asleep. The idea is that at no time and in no circumstance does he dwell in the body. Having become one with the Absolute, he is never and on no account disunited from Him, He remains unaltered in all circumstances. That is why he has been called 'Brahmaṇi Sthitaḥ'.

The characteristics of a person established in Brahma having thus been described, the Lord now proceeds to point out the means of attaining such a state of mind and the fruit thereof:—

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम्।
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥ २१ ॥

बाह्यस्पर्शेषु to external enjoyments; असक्तात्मा one whose mind is unattached; यत् which; आत्मनि (dwells) in the mind; सुखम् (that) joy (of a Sāttvika type); विन्दति derives (through meditation); स he; ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा becoming one with Brahma (through meditation); अक्षयम् eternal; सुखम् Bliss; अश्नुते enjoys.

He whose mind remains unattached to sense-objects, derives through meditation the Sāttvika joy which dwells in the mind; then that Yogī, having completely identified himself through meditation with Brahma, enjoys eternal Bliss. (21)

Object of senses such as sound, touch colour, taste and smell etc., are denoted by the word 'Bāhyasparseṣu'. And he who has with the help of his reason driven out from his mind all attachment for these, who has withdrawn his mind from all enjoyments and who has developed a feeling of indifference towards them, is referred to here by the words 'Bāhyasparśeṣu Asaktātmā'.

The joy which is spoken of as dwelling in the mind is the joy that one derives from constant and ceaseless meditation on God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. He who takes delight in sense-enjoyments alone can never experience this joy. In fact, there is no joy in external

enjoyments, but only a semblance of it. The joy born of dispassion is far greater than this semblance of joy and the happiness resulting from quietism is of a still higher nature. But the joy which is derived from constant and unbroken meditation on God surpasses all.

The phrase 'Eternal Bliss' stands here for the Imperishable God who is ever the same and is the very embodiment of supreme Bliss. And the enjoyment of this bliss consists in realizing one's identity with Him, as a result of constant and unbroken meditation. No other joy can stand in comparison with this. The joy that one finds in worldly enjoyments is utterly negligible and momentary. The joy born of dispassion and that resulting from quietism, being conducive to the joy derived from meditation, are comparatively lasting; while the joy derived from meditation being the direct cause of God-realization is still more lasting. But none of these joys, connected with the period of spiritual practice, can be called 'eternal'. Eternal Bliss is the same as God.

Having thus declared renunciation of attachment for sense-objects as conducive to God-realization, the Lord now indirectly calls upon Arjuna in the following verse to renounce attachment for sense-objects, proclaiming them to be the source of suffering and transient:—

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः॥ २२॥

ये which; संस्पर्शजाः born of sense-contacts; भोगाः pleasures; ते they; हि verily; दुःखयोनयः एव only a source of suffering; आद्यन्तवन्तः having a beginning and an end, fleeting; कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; बुधः the wise man; तेषु in them; न does not; रमते indulge.

The pleasures which are born of sense-contacts are verily a source of suffering only (though appearing as enjoyable to worldly-minded people). They have a beginning and an end (they come and go). Arjuna, it is for this reason that a wise man does not indulge in them. (22)

The unintelligent moth, which cannot foresee the result of its instinctive action, erroneously considers the flame to be a source of joy, rushes towards it to hug it and falling into it undergoes severe roasting and scorches itself to death. Even so the ignorant man, considering sense-enjoyments to be a source of joy, gets attached to them, and seeks to enjoy them and reaps great sorrows and sufferings through their enjoyment.

He who enjoys sense-objects, regarding them as a source of delight gets attached to them; attachment begets other evils like lust, anger etc., and from lust and anger spring up all sorts of vices and rogueries, which take possession of his heart. The result is that his life gets involved in sin and consequently he has to undergo terrible sufferings and tortures both here and hereafter.

Man erroneously regards sense-enjoyments like sexual intercourse as a source of joy. But in the long run they bring about loss of strength, virility, longevity, and the energy of his mind, intellect, vital organs and senses; and in the event of their transgressing the limit imposed by the scriptures, they bring him terrible tortures of hell in the next world and prove to be a source of untold suffering.

Besides this, when an ignorant man sees another with more objects of enjoyment than he has, the fire of jealousy gets

kindled in his heart and begins to burn him.

Again, if sense-objects enjoyed with a relish get lost due to a freak of destiny, the impressions left by them arouse their memory again and again; and as man recalls them he is filled with sorrow. He weeps and cries over them and is tormented with a sense of frustration. All this proves that enjoyments derived from contact with sense-objects are only a source of suffering as a matter of fact and have no trace of joy in them. They appear delightful only through ignorance and perverted vision. That is why the Lord declares them to be a source of suffering only.

Sense-enjoyments are fleeting and momentary as a dream or a flash of lightning. This is what is meant by calling them 'Ādyantavantaḥ'. In reality there is no joy in them; but due to ignorance they appear as full of joy. Hence even if we assume them to be a source of joy in some degree, that joy too is not lasting but only ephemeral. For that which is fleeting itself cannot give permanent joy. In verse 14 of the second chapter the sense-objects have been declared as transient, because they come and go.

Arjuna's mother, Kuntī, was very intelligent, sensible, self-controlled and averse to sense-enjoyments. Though belonging to the fair sex, which is traditionally associated with frailty, she spent all her life in piety combined with dispassion and devotion. Therefore, by addressing Arjuna as 'Kaunteya' the Lord reminds him of the greatness of his mother and conveys to him the hint that having been born of such a saintly and pious mother it was beyond expectation that he would ever feel attracted towards sense-enjoyments.

Sense-enjoyments are really fleeting, ephemeral and full of sorrow; yet the ignorant and undiscriminating, shutting their eyes to this fact indulge in them and undergo all sorts of suffering and agony. But the wise and the discriminating ponder over their fleeting and ephemeral nature and finding in them the seeds of evils like lust and anger, sin and misery, realise that renunciation of attachment for them will bring eternal Bliss. That is why they refuse to indulge in them.

Having declared sense-enjoyments to be a source of suffering inasmuch as they beget lust and anger, the Lord, while revealing the importance of the human body, praises the man who conquers enemies like lust and anger, which are difficult to conquer:—

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात्।
कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः॥ २३॥

यः who; इह here, in this human life; शरीरविमोक्षणात् प्राक् before casting off the body; एव even; कामक्रोधोद्भवम् of lust and anger; वेगम् the urges; सोढुम् to stand; शक्नोति is able; सः that; नरः man; युक्तः (is) a Yogī; सः (and) he (again); सुखी (is) happy.

He alone who is able to stand, in this very life before-casting off this body, the urges of lust and anger is Yogī; and he alone is a happy man. (23)

Here the indeclinables 'Iha' and 'Eva' have been used to denote the importance of the human body. In superhuman or celestial forms there is a superabundance of luxuries and enjoyments; whereas in sub-human forms dullness reigns supreme. Therefore, one cannot find means to conquer lust and anger in all those forms. Hence by adopting the use

of 'Iha' and 'Eva' the Lord warns us as it were to acquire through earnest endeavour the strength to endure the urges of lust and anger calmly in this very life before casting off the mortal frame. If through negligence and carelessness this rare boon of human existence is frittered away in accumulating and enjoying sense-objects alone vain repentence will be the only course left to us.

It is laid down in the *Kena upaniṣad:* "If one comes to know the Reality in this human life it is very satisfactory; if one fails to realize it here, it is an incalculable loss"* (II.5).

The body is perishable; it is sure to drop off sooner or later and no one knows which is going to be the last moment for one. Hence lust and anger should be conquered before the hour of death arrives. At the same time, through spiritual practice, the Sādhaka should acquire necessary strength to resist the repeated onslaughts of these arch-enemies in the form of lust and anger, and frustrate their attempt to upset him by their urgings. He must see to it that these enemies in the form of lust, anger, etc., disappear and take leave of him with all their force, even as the waters of so many rivers get lost into the ocean along with their currents.

Man bears a natural attraction for woman; and the desire to possess a wife, progeny, wealth, a house to live in or an abode in heaven and other objects of enjoyment of the mind and senses that are seen or heard of, and for which one bears a natural attraction, is known as 'Kāma' or lust. And the stirring of thoughts of various kinds produced in the mind due to this desire constitutes what is know as the urge of 'Kāma'. Even so when a man comes in touch with objects which are disagreeable to the mind, intellect and senses, or when he finds himself thwarted in his attempt to obtain the object of his desire, he feels a natural aversion for the object or individual that stands in his way. The agitation caused in his mind by this aversion is known as 'anger'. And the currents and cross-currents of thought stirred up by it are what they call its urgings. And to acquire the power of not allowing them to have their way is what is meant by being able to stand them.

The word 'Yuktaḥ' here stands for one who has subdued his mind and senses, and is thus qualified to tread the path of Knowledge.

Everybody in the world seeks happiness. But very few know what is real happiness and how to attain it. Due to this ignorance they run away with the wrong idea that happiness consists only in enjoying the objects of senses. That is why they hanker after them and strive to attain them. And when they find themselves balked in their efforts, they are seized with anger. But as a rule one who is habitually under the sway of lust and anger can never be happy. One who is under the sway of desire and the one who is under the sway of anger, both betake themselves to all sorts of mischiefs and vices—the former for the sake of a wife, progeny, wealth and honour, etc. and the latter with view to harming others. They thereby expose themselves to illness, grief, ignominy, infamy, perturbation, unrest, anxiety and various kinds of agonies in this world and have to undergo tortures in hell and sufferings of various kinds in the lower species of animals, such as birds and, beasts, insects and reptiles, when born hereafter (XVI.18-20). In this way they never attain happiness, and always suffer pain. Those, on the other hand, who having realized that enjoyments breed misery and are ephemeral in nature have fully subdued their enemies in the form of lust and anger and have

* इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः।

completely extricated themselves from their grip, are always happy. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the concluding portion of the above verse.

He alone is a real 'Nara' or man, who having thus subdued his evil propensities like lust and anger and developed dispassion and quietism attains God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. The word 'Naraḥ' signifies such a person, no matter to which sex he belongs.

Man is deluded by ignorance and is a slave of attachment. Hence he falls an easy prey to the lure of sense-enjoyments, which are charming only to look at, and forgets God. The result is that he gives himself up to evil propensities like lust and anger and remains engrossed in stuffing his belly, sleep, carnality and quarrel like lowly beasts and devils. He is not a man but a peculiar type of unsightly animal without horns and tail and even more degraded than the beast, not only useless but positively obnoxious to the world. Following the example and trying to imitate the virtues of a real 'Nara', a God-realized soul, he who has conquered his enemies like lust and anger also deserves the title of 'Naraḥ'. It is in this latter sense that the word 'Naraḥ' has been used in this verse.

The verse obviously refers to a Sādhaka following the path of Knowledge and cannot be taken as a true picture of the man who has realized the goal. For one cannot be said to have realized the goal merely by being able to conquer lust and anger. A perfect soul, on the other hand, has no trace of lust or anger in him. This is what the Lord says in verse 26 below. Again, the man referred to above has been spoken of as merely "happy". Had the verse referred to a perfect soul who has attained 'Eternal Bliss' mentioned in verse 21 supra an adjective like 'supremely happy' or some other such qualification should have been used. The joy attained by this man is the same as has been referred to in the first half of verse 21 above as derived from meditation on God. Therefore, the subject of this verse should be taken to be a Sādhaka only.

The Lord now describes in the following verse the final stage, with its fruit, of a Sāṅkhyayogī who has, in the aforesaid manner, succeeded in conquering lust and anger after realizing the external enjoyments to be a source of suffering and renouncing attachment:—

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः।
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति॥ २४॥

यः who; अन्तःसुखः (is) happy within himself; अन्तरारामः enjoys within himself (the delight of the soul); तथा and; एव verily; यः who; अन्तर्ज्योतिः is illumined by the inner light; सः that; ब्रह्मभूतः identified with Brahma; योगी Sāṅkhyayogī; ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् Brahma who is all Peace; अधिगच्छति attains.

He who is happy within himself, enjoys within himself the delight of the soul, and even so is illumined by the inner light (light of the soul), such a Yogī (Sāṅkhyayogī) identified with Brahma attains Brahma, who is all Peace. (24)

Here the word 'Antaḥ' denotes God, who indwells or permeates the whole universe, and not the inner sense. 'Antaḥsukhaḥ', therefore, refers to the man who finds no joy in worldly pleasures consisting in the enjoyment of external objects of senses,

which he regards as ephemeral like a dream, but finds joy in God alone, who is the embodiment of supreme Bliss and is immanent in all.

Such a man does not even recognize the existence of external enjoyments, much less their being a source of joy. Hence he does not indulge in them, and renouncing attachment for all these, takes delight in God alone. In other words, he is constantly absorbed in meditation on God, the embodiment of supreme Bliss, as identical with him. This is what is meant by the word 'Antarārāmaḥ',

Again, God is the supreme light of all lights (XIII.17). The whole world is illumined by His effulgence. Ever conscious of such a God, the embodiment of supreme Knowledge, as his own self, the man referred to above remains constantly established in Him. Nay, in the eyes of such a man no phenomenal object has any reality apart from God, the embodiment of supreme Bliss. This is what is meant by his being 'Antarjyotiḥ'.

He, on the other hand, is not 'Antarjyoti', to whom the whole world appears as real and who under the spell of ignorance thinks of the visible world alone, even as a dreaming man while asleep thinks of the dream only. For God, the embodiment of supreme Knowledge, is screened from his view.

The indeclinable 'Eva' is related with all the three adjectives 'Antaḥsukhaḥ', 'Antarārāmaḥ' and 'Antarjyotiḥ' and denotes exclusiveness, the intention is that the Yogī ceases to have any connection with this phenomenal world, inasmuch as he finds his joy, gratification and light in God alone.

The word 'Brahmabhūtaḥ' indicates the final stage of a Sāṅkhyayogī. The Sādhaka following the path of Knowledge renounces egoism, the sense of possession and all evil propensities like lust and anger, and incessantly goes on meditating upon God as his own self. In this way when he becomes one with Him and does not maintain his separate identity in the least degree, he is said to have completely identified himself with God and is known as 'Brahmabhūtaḥ'. This constitutes the final stage or culmination of his Sādhanā.

The term 'Brahmanirvāṇam' denotes God, who is all peace, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, Attributeless, Formless and Absolute. And to attain 'Brahmanirvāṇa' is to perceive directly one's identity with God. This is the fruit of the culmination of a Sāṅkhyayogī's Sādhanā indicated by the adjective 'Brahmabhūtaḥ'. The Śruti also says: "Becoming one with the Absolute, he realizes the Absolute"* *(Bṛh. up., IV.iv.6)*.

This state of God-realization is variously termed as the attainment of Eternal peace,. the attainment of Eternal Bliss, the attainment of the Absolute, the attainment of Liberation and the attainment of the supreme Goal.

The following two verses describe the characteristics of those who have thus realized God, the supreme Reality:—

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः।
छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः॥ २५॥

क्षीणकल्मषाः whose sins have been wiped out; **छिन्नद्वैधाः** whose doubts have been slashed to pieces (through the sword of Knowledge); **सर्वभूतहिते रताः** who are actively engaged in the

* ब्रह्मैव सन् 'ब्रह्माप्येति'।

service of all beings; यतात्मान: (and) whose mind is controlled and firmly rests in God; ऋषय: the seers, the knowers of Reality; ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् Brahma, who is all peace; लभन्ते attain.

The seers whose sins have been wiped out, whose doubts have been dispelled by Knowledge, whose disciplined mind is firmly established in God and who are actively engaged in the service of all beings, attain Brahma, who is all peace. (25)

Latencies of actions performed in this as well as in other lives, evils such as likes and dislikes and heaps of their tendencies, accumulated in man's mind, are all covered by the word 'Kalmaṣa' or sin, inasmuch as they lead to bondage. With the attainment of God-realization all these get eradicated, and no trace of an evil is left in man's mind. Thus absence of the evil of 'impurity' is shown by the use of the adjective 'Kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ'.

The word 'Dvaidha' denotes doubt or a state of quandary induced by ignorance. With the true Knowledge of God, all doubts disappear alongwith their cause, *viz.*, ignorance. In other words, no trace of the evils of distraction and obscurity is left in the stainless mind of a God-realized soul. This is what is meant by the adjective 'Chinnadvaidhāḥ'.

A 'Yatātmā is he whose disciplined mind, being absolutely free from the evils of unsteadiness etc., is fully merged in God. With the realization of God, all distinctions of 'mine' and 'thine' disappear.

A God-realized soul views all beings as his own self. Therefore, even as the ignorant man identifying himself with the body remains actively engaged in its service, so does the wise man, equally identifying himself with all, naturally keeps himself engaged in the service of all beings. This is what is meant by the words 'Sarvabhūtahite Ratāḥ'.

But what is stated above with regard to a wise man is true only from the standpoint of the world and is intended just to give an idea of his ideal behaviour. Really speaking, in the eyes of a wise man no such thing as 'all beings' exists apart from God, the only Reality, nor does he claim to serve them.

The word 'Ṛṣi' is derived from the root 'Ṛṣ' which denotes motion, and by implication carries the sense of knowledge or a vision of Reality. Accordingly a 'Ṛṣi' is one who has thoroughly grasped the real Truth. Therefore, it is quite reasonable to interpret 'Ṛṣi' as meaning the knower of Brahma. The use of the adjectives 'Kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ', 'Chinnadvaidhāḥ' and 'Yatātmānaḥ', also support this interpretation.

The Śruti says: "With the realization of God, who is both the cause of this universe and the universe itself, the knot of ignorance in the heart of the God-realized soul is broken, all doubts are slashed to pieces and the latencies of all actions wiped out."* *(Muṇḍ. Up.*, II.ii.8)

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम्।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम्॥ २६॥

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानाम् to those who are free from lust and anger; यतचेतसाम् to those who have subdued their mind; विदितात्मनाम् to those who have realized God; यतीनाम् to those wise men; अभित: all round; ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् Brahma, the abode of eternal peace; वर्तते is present.

To those wise men who are free from lust and anger, who have subdued

* भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः। क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे॥

their mind and have realized God, Brahma, the abode of eternal peace, is present all round. (26)

The mind of the wise is absolutely pure. Hence no trace of morbid feelings like lust and anger remains therein. This is what is indicated by the use of the term 'Kāmakrodhaviyuktānām'. Whatever is done through the agency of the mind and senses of such lofty souls is naturally conducive to the interests of others. If in his active life and according to the needs of the moment his mind and senses display lust or anger which is consistent with the injunctions of the scriptures, it should be taken to be a mere sport enacted in the interests of the world order. It is just like the behaviour of an actor in a play.

The evils of impurity, distraction and obscurity are the three great obstacles in the path of Knowledge. The wise alone are completely free from them. The adjectives 'Kāmakrodhaviyuktānām', 'Yatacetasām' and 'Viditātmanām' in this verse are intended to indicate complete absence of the evils of impurity, distraction and obscurity respectively; and thus the attainment of complete knowledge of God has been shown here. It is, therefore, quite reasonable to construe the word 'Yatī' as meaning a self-controlled man of Knowledge who has realized God through the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga.

In the eyes of the God-realized soul God alone, who is the supreme Reality and the embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss, exists here, there and everywhere, in all directions, above as well as below, outside as well as inside, at all times and every moment. Nothing else than Brahma, the one without a second, has any reality. This is what is meant by the statement that "to the wise man God is present all round."

Realization of God through both the paths of Action and Knowledge, and the characteristics of God-realized souls have been spoken of in the above verses. In order to show that followers of the paths of Knowledge and Action both can with advantage practise meditation after duly controlling their mind and senses with the help of dispassion; the Lord now proceeds to describe in brief the Yoga of Meditation (Dhyānayoga) with its fruit:—

स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥ २७ ॥
यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥ २८ ॥

बाह्यान् external; स्पर्शान् sense-enjoyments; बहिः एव कृत्वा verily shutting out (of the mind by refusing to think of them); च and; चक्षुः the gaze; भ्रुवोः अन्तरे (कृत्वा) (fixing) on the space between the eye-brows; नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ flowing within the nostrils; प्राणापानौ the Prāṇa and the Apāna breaths; समौ कृत्वा having regulated; यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिः who has brought his senses, mind and reason under control; मोक्षपरायणः intent on liberation; यः who; विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधः (is) free from desire, fear and anger; सः मुनिः that contemplative soul; सदा ever; मुक्तः (is) liberated; एव verily.

Shutting out all thoughts of external enjoyments, with the gaze fixed on the

space between the eye-brows, having regulated the Prāṇa (outgoing) and the Apāna (ingoing) breaths flowing within the nostrils; he who has brought his senses, mind and intellect under control,—such as contemplative soul intent on liberation and free from desire, fear and anger, is ever liberated. (27,28)

Each individual has been in contact with external objects from time without beginning; his mind is, therefore crowded with impressions left by them, which are countless in number. Regarding sense-objects as charming and delightful, man ever goes on dwelling on them, with the result that old impressions, stored up in the mind, get revived one after another and continue to stir the fire of attachment and desire burning in his heart. His mind is, therefore, never at rest. Nay, memories of past experiences keep haunting his mind even when he occasionally sits down to meditate on God in some secluded corner, renouncing sense-objects externally. The result is that he is unable to meditate upon God. Constant thoughts of sense-objects are the main obstacle in his way. And this chain does not end so long as one regards these objects as delightful. It is, therefore, that the Lord asks us to realize by dint of reason and dispassion all external objects as ephemeral, transient, full of sorrow and a source of suffering, and wipe off all their impressions from our mind. Then and then alone will the mind be tranquil and steady.

* * *

If we keep our eyes wide open and go on gazing all round our attention will be naturally diverted and we shall not be able to collect and concentrate our mind; if, on the other hand, we close our eyes, we are apt to fall an easy prey to sloth and drowsiness. That is why we have been asked to keep the gaze fixed on the space between the eye-brows. Beside; there are other reasons also connected with the science of Yoga. We are told that in the space between the eye-brows is located the bi-petalled spiritual plexus known as the 'Ājñā-Cakra'. In the vicinity of this plexus lie the seven sheaths, the last of which is known as 'Unmanī' having reached this last sheath, the soul does not return to this mortal world. It is for this reason that the Yogīs fix their gaze on the 'Ājñā-Cakra'.

The next step we have been called upon to take is to regulate the flow of the outgoing and ingoing breaths. Let us remember in this connection that the natural flow of the outgoing and ingoing breaths is uneven. Sometimes they flow through the left nostril and sometimes through the right. When flowing through the left, they are said to be flowing through the passage of 'Iḍa'; and when flowing through the right, they are said to be flowing through the passage of 'Pingalā'. In such a state, man's mind remains unsteady. To maintain an even flow of the Prāṇa and the Apāna breaths through both the nostrils is what is meant by regulating their flow. This is also known as directing their flow through the channel of 'Suṣumṇā'. When passing through the 'Suṣumṇā' the flow of the Prāṇa and Apāna breaths is very thin and gentle. In this state the unsteadiness and restlessness of the mind automatically disappear, and it gets easily concentrated on God.

In order to maintain an even flow of the two breaths, the Apāna breath should be inhaled through the left nostril, and the Prāṇa breath exhaled through the right. The order should be changed alternately. Mental repetition of God's Name should continue side by side with this process and an endeavour should be made to see to it that the processes of exhalation and inhalation take an equal amount of time, and to make

their flow even and thinner. Through continuous practice when the flow of both becomes even, gentle and this and they cease to be felt outside the nose and within the throat and so on, it should be understood that the prāṇa and Apāna breaths have become regulated and thin.

The adjective 'Nāsābhyantaracāriṇau' has been used just to indicate that the processes of exhalation and inhalation have to be regulated and made even and not to be suspended in this practice.

* * *

The senses are noted for their waywardness; they run after any object they like and any time they please, of their own free will. The mind too is ever unsteady and loath to give up its habits; and the intellect does not firmly adhere to one supreme conviction. To reduce them to orderliness and submission and turn them inwards or Godwards by regular training with the help of reason and dispassion is what is meant by bringing them under control. This being done, the senses will not wantonly indulge in their respective objects but will tamely follow our will and remain tied down to where we direct them to be; the mind will get concentrated according to our will, and the intellect will firmly and resolutely adhere to one conclusion of our choice. It is believed, and rightly so, that the fifth limb of the Āṣṭāṅgayoga or the Yoga of eight limbs, viz., 'Pratyāhāra' (which consists in with drawing the senses from their objects) is easily accomplished through control of the senses; the next limb, viz., 'Dhāraṇā' (focussing the mind on a particular spot) becomes easy through subjugation of mind; and control over the intellect makes the seventh limb, *viz*., Dhyāna or meditation (fastening the intellect to one conclusion) easy. Therefore, in the practice of meditation subjugation of all these three is essential.

* * *

Mokṣa or Liberation is the same as God-realization, the attainment of the Supreme Goal or the Highest Abode or Mukti (Release). This is a state which lies beyond the range of mind and speech. Only this much can be said with regard to it that in this state man is released completely and once for all, from all the shackles of Karma and becomes the very embodiment of supreme Blessedness and the highest Bliss, infinite and unique in character. He who has thoroughly devoted his senses, mind and intellect to the attainment of this Liberation or God, is ever and unceasingly striving after this end, nay, whose sole aim is to realize God and who does not consider anything else as worth seeking for, is signified by the word 'Mokṣaparāyaṇaḥ'.

'Muni' literally means one who is given to contemplation. Hence the word 'Muniḥ' stands here for him who, having a firm belief in the omnipresence of God, is always busy contemplating on Him even in his active life as in the hours of meditation.

* * *

Desire is always preceded by a feeling of want; fear has its root in an apprehension of mishap; while anger ensues when someone interferes with the attainment of one's desire or when one's will is not carried out. He who attains perfection through the practice of meditation as described above feels the presence of God and God alone every where and at every time and misses Him nowhere. What, then, can he wish for ? when there is no reality other than God and when God, who is ever-existent, eternal limitless and imperishable, never loses anything, why should there be any fear following from an apprehension of mishap ? And when he ceases to have any desire or longing having fully and eternally realized God, how and

on whom will he be angry ? Therefore, in this state, his mind will never and under no circumstance entertain a desire of any sort either during his active life or even in a dream nor can he have any cause for fear, and nor again will he feel angry under any circumstance. This is what is meant by the adjective 'Vigatecchābhayakrodhaḥ'.

The indeclinable 'Eva' denotes certainty. That is to say, the exalted soul who has by means of the above practices completely rid himself of desire, fear and anger stands liberated under all circumstances, viz., during meditation as well as in active life and no matter whether he is alive or dead. He has without doubt obtained complete freedom once for all from the trammels of the world, and has realized God.

In the course of His reply to Arjuna's query, the Lord discussed the nature of Karmayoga and Sāṅkhyayoga, spoke of the attainment of God through both these disciplines and described the characteristics of those who have attained perfection through either. Then He briefly dealt with Dhyānayoga or the path of Meditation too as auxiliary to both disciplines. Now for the man who finds himself unable to follow any of these three paths, subduing his mind and senses in the manner stated above, the Lord gives below a brief description of Bhaktiyoga (the Yoga of Devotion), which easily leads to the attainment of the highest Goal.

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम्।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति॥ २९॥

माम् Me; यज्ञतपसाम् of (all) sacrifices and austerities; भोक्तारम् the enjoyer; सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् the supreme Lord of all the worlds; सर्वभूतानाम् of all beings; सुहृदम् the disinterested friend; ज्ञात्वा having known (in reality); शान्तिम् peace; ऋच्छति attains.

Having known Me in reality as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the supreme Lord of all the worlds, and the disinterested friend of all beings, My devotee attains peace. (29)

Practice of virtues like non-violence, truth etc., service and adoration of parents and other elders, of gods as well as the Brāhmaṇas, affording relief to the afflicted, and distressed, the poor and the oppressed, with love and regard, the adequate means adopted for alleviating their suffering, and all other virtuous actions such as the performance of a sacrifice, charity etc., are included in 'sacrifice' and 'austerities'. God is the soul of all beings (X.20). Therefore, it is God Himself existing in the form of gods, the Brāhmaṇas, the afflicted and the distressed, who receives all services and worship. Therefore, truly speaking, He is the only enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities (IX.24). Not knowing the reality and power of God, men regard the gods and men whom they serve and adore as the recipients of their sacrifices and service etc; hence the reward which they get in lieu thereof is only finite and perishable (VII.23). They do not attain real peace. But the man who knows the reality and glory of God sees God Himself seated in all as their very self. Therefore, conscious of His presence in all beings, when he serves them he feels that in the form of gods, the Brāhmaṇas, the afflicted and the distressed, etc., he is serving none else than the all-pervading Lord, the highest object of his worship and love. A man finds excessive

joy and a unique mental peace in the service of him whom he regards as deserving of the least honour and regard, for whom he has the least reverence and respect, or for whom he cherishes an iota of true love in his heart. Does a devoted son feel any fatigue in the service of his father, an affectionate mother in looking after her son and a loving wife in attending on her lord? Does a true disciple or follower evade on any account the service of his venerable preceptor or spiritual guide ? One feels ever inspired with new vigour in serving the object of one's esteem, veneration or love, and will never be fed up with his or her service. Such a man will never think that he is in any way obliging the object of his service nor will he attach any importance to his services. On the other hand he will take such an opportunity of service as a proud privilege. The more he is able to serve, the greater is the degree of modesty and true humility he manifests. Far from feeling that he is doing an obligation to the object of his service he is afraid every moment lest he be deprived of that privilege. He takes to this service only because it fills his mind with unique peace. But this peace does not deter him from the path of service, becuase his heart is ever brimming with excessive joy and unsatiated with it he feels inclined to serve more and more. When service evoked by worldly esteem, veneration and love is so sincere, so earnest and so peace-giving, no one can tell how much and what kind of transcendent joy and unique and heavenly peace a devotee must be experiencing, who perceives in all his most beloved Lord, the highest objects of worship for the whole world, the Supreme Deity of all deities, Omnipotent, and the Eternal Abode of the highest glory and unthinkable majesty, and worships Him with a sincerity full of genuine faith and intense love continuously flowing towards Him in a stream of the purest and sweetest nectar. Those alone who enjoy this rare privilege through the Grace of God can realize this.

* * *

God is the Lord and Master of Indra (Regent of the eastern quarter), Varuṇa (Regent of the western quarter), Kubera (Regent of the northern quarter), Yama (Regent of the southern quarter) and other regional guardians of the world, as also of the Lords of different universes controlling the affairs of their respective universes. Hence the Śruti says: "To Him, the supreme Lord of all Lords"* *(Svet. Up.,* VI.7).

The Lord creates, maintains and dissolves the myriads of world-systems as a part of His Cosmic Play through His indescribable divine potency known by the name of Māyā, and duly controlling them all still remains aloof from all. To know God as Omnipotent, the controller and supervisor of all, and the Overlord of all Lords in this way is to know Him as the "Supreme Lord of all worlds". The devotee who has thus known Him comes to realize His great glory and divinity and cannot forget Him even for a moment. Altogether free from fear and anxiety, he dwells exclusively upon Him. Enemies like lust and anger, which disturb the calm of one's mind, cannot even approach him. In his eyes, there is none greater than God. Therefore, he is always and constantly absorbed in meditation on God, the boundless ocean of supreme peace and bliss. This is how he attains peace.

Again, there is nothing in the whole world, which is unattained by God and for which He may have any selfish connection with anyone. He is always and at every moment fully satisfied (III.22). But being

---

* तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरम्।

the very embodiment of compassion, He naturally provides for the well-being of all as an act of Grace to all, and appearing amidst us again and again performs such a variety of wonderful deeds that men obtain redemption by merely chanting them. The good of the world is involved in all His activities. He confers a boon even on those whom He kills or chastises. No dispensation of His is devoid of compassion and love. Hence God is the disinterested friend of all creatures. People do not know this secret; that is why they rejoice and grieve on coming in contact with what is agreeable and disagreeable respectively in the eyes of the world; and that is why they have no peace of mind. He who comes to know and believe that God is his disinterested friend and lover and that whatever He does is conducive to his welfare remains ever joyful. He regards every thing that happens as a blessed dispensation of the all-merciful God, full of love and kindness. Hence he obtains everlasting Peace. There remains no cause for his mental peace being disturbed in any way. Even in the world we find that if an ordinary man stands in the good grace of a high officer wielding great power and authority or some ruler or king, and comes to know that such and such a man of authority and power really wishes him well and is ready to protect him, he considers himself very lucky and shaking off all anxiety and fear is transported with joy, even though the said officer or ruler is not altogether unselfish, nor all-powerful and nor the master of all. It will be difficult for us to judge how much and what kind of unearthly joy and unique peace will be attained by us if God Himself, who is all-powerful and all-seeing, the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, the Controller and inner Witness of all, and an ocean of infinite and unthinkable virtues. proclaims Himself to be our disinterested friend and we for our part put faith in His words and acknowledge Him as our Friend !

Now the question is, Do we attain peace only if we know that God is possessed of all the three attributes mentioned in this verse or by simply knowing Him to be possessed of any one of these virtues ? Our answer is that even he who realizes Him as endowed with only one of the above virtues obtains peace, to say nothing of him who knows Him to be possessed of all the three attributes. For even the former cannot but adore Him with exclusive devotion. As a result of this adoration the Grace of God begins to descend on him, and through Divine Grace he speedily realizes His nature, glory, reality and virtues, and attains perfect peace. And when he compares himself, a mean and insignificant creature, with the Supreme Lord of the whole creation, who rests eternally in His infinite and unthinkable glory, who is adored by the whole order of gods and great Ṛṣis or sages, is the sole enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, and the supreme Lord of all Lords and myriads of universes, and feels such a Lord to be his loving friend, his joy and peace know no bounds. Nay, he will feel that he is the most lucky of all creatures, the most favoured of all human beings. One cannot imagine with what gratitude of heart unknown before, with what peculiar feelings surging within him, and with what ecstasy of joy he throws himself once for all at the holy feet of the Lord !

* * *

The realize God as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the supreme Lord of all the worlds, and the disinterested friend of all creatures, and to realize His Nature, glory, reality and attributes one should cultivate devout and loving association with exalted souls, hear and ponder over the teachings of the scriptures and should

fervently pray to Him throwing oneself completely at His mercy, so that through His Grace everything will be revealed and the seeker will develop exclusive devotion to Him.

The word Mām, in this verse stands for the integral Divinity who, though unborn, imperishable and the supreme Lord of all beings, appears from time to time in our midst through His Yogamāyā or divine potency to revel in Sports summoning His Prakṛti to his aid, who is now preaching to Arjuna in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and who is both attributeless and with attributes, formless as well as endowed with Form, manifest as well as unmanifest, existing in all forms the supreme Reality and oversoul, Omnipotent, all-pervading, the substratum of all and the Supreme Lord of all spheres.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मसन्न्यासयोगो
नाम पञ्चमोऽध्यायः ॥५॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the fifth chapter entitled "The Yogas of Action and Knowledge."

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter VI

This chapter discusses at length Dhyānayoga or the Yoga of Meditation as auxiliary to the practice of both Karmayoga and Sāṅkhyayoga. Control over the body, senses, mind and intellect is extremely necessary in Dhyānayoga. The body, senses, mind and intellect—all these are designated by the term 'Ātmā' (self) and the chapter specially deals with their control; therefore it has been given the title of "The Yoga of Self-Control."

Title of the Chapter

Verse 1 of this chapter contains a tribute to the Karmayogī. Establishing the identity of 'Saṁnyāsa' and 'Karmayoga' in verse 2, the Lord describes in verse 3 the means as well as the fruit of attaining perfection in Karmayoga. Verse 4 shows the marks of the man who has climbed to the heights of Yoga. Verse 5 encourages man to attain to the heights of Yoga, and lays down his duty. Verse 6 explains how "one's own self is one's friend, and one's own self is one's enemy," and verse 7 shows the fruit of subduing the body, mind, senses etc. Verses 8 and 9 describe the marks and glory of the God-realized soul. Urging the necessity of practising Dhyānayoga in verse 10 the Lord discusses in verses 11 to 14 one after another the place and seat suitable for the practice of meditation as well as the mode of practising it. Dealing with the fruit of the practice of Dhyānayoga in verse 15 the Lord prescribes in verses 16 and 17 rules regarding diet, recreation, and sleep etc., suitable for Dhyānayoga and the fruit of following those rules. Describing in verse 18 the marks of one who has attained the final stage in the practice of Dhyānayoga, the Lord depicts in verse 19 the state of a Yogī's mind by adopting the analogy of a light. Describing in verses 20 to 22 the state of mind of one who has realized God through the practice of Dhyānayoga, He terms it as 'Yoga' in verse 23, and urges the advisability of attaining it. Detailing in verses 24 and 25 the process of meditation on God as one with the Sādhaka, the Lord urges in verse 26 the necessity of withdrawing the mind again and again from objects of senses and concentrating it on God. Verses 27 and 28 declare that the practice of Dhyānayoga leads to the attainment of "everlasting bliss". Describing in verse 29 the state of the Sāṅkhyayogī during his active life, the Lord depicts in verse 30 the final stage in the practice of the Bhaktiyogī or follower of the path of Devotion, and how he sees God everywhere and in all beings. Verse 31 describes the marks and glory of the soul who has realized God through the practice of Devotion, and verse 32 of the soul who has reached that consummation through the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga. Declaring in verse 33 stability in Yoga in the form of equability as difficult of attainment owing to restlessness of the mind, Arjuna pronounces the mind also in verse 34 as exceedingly difficult to control. Confirming the statement of Arjuna, the Lord shows in verse 35 the ways of controlling the mind. Verse 36 says that Yoga is difficult to attain

Summary of the Chapter

for one whose mind is not subdued, but easy of attainment by one who has control over it. Interrogating the Lord in verses 37 and 38 about the fate of one who has fallen from Yoga, in verse 39 Arjuna implores Him to clear his doubts. The Lord answers Arjuna's queries in verses 40 to 45 showing that those who have fallen from Yoga do not meet with an evil destiny, but ascend to heaven after death and are reborn in the house of pious and wealthy men, whereas such among them as are full of dispassion are born in the family of enlightened Yogīs, wherein they automatically regain the understanding of their previous birth; that even those born in a rich family feel drawn to-wards God by the force of their past habit; and in conclusion He reveals the glory of seeking Yoga in the shape of equability and describes the ultimate destiny of him who takes birth in the family of Yogīs Describing the glory of a Yogī, the Lord exhorts Arjuna in verse 46 to become a Yogī, and concludes the chapter in verse 47 by praising of all the Yogīs him, who devoutly adores the Lord with exclusive devotion.

Link of the Chapter

In the beginning of Chapter V Arjuna requested the Lord to tell him definitely whether 'Karmasaṁnyāsa' (Sāṅkhyayoga) or 'Karmayoga' was decidedly conducive to his highest good. In reply to this the Lord declared both the disciplines as leading to the highest goal, but pronounced Karmayoga as superior inasmuch as it is easier of practice. He then thoroughly discussed the nature, modes of practice and fruit of both the disciplines, and briefly introduced the subject of Dhyānayoga as well, taking it as exceedingly useful in the practice of both the above disciplines, and as a principal means of God-realization. But Arjuna was neither clearly instructed as to which of the two disciplines he should adopt for practice, nor all the limbs and aspects of Dhyānayoga were brought out in detail in that chapter. Chapter VI is, therefore, introduced in order to discuss the subject of Dhyānayoga in detail with all its limbs, and begins with a praise of Karmayoga in the following words, with a view to inducing Arjuna to take to Karmayoga mixed with Bhakti or devotion:—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः।
स सन्न्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः॥ १॥

यः who; कर्मफलम् on the fruit of actions; अनाश्रितः depending not; कार्यम् obligatory; कर्म acts; करोति performs; सः he; सन्न्यासी (is) a Saṁnyāsī (Sāṅkhyayogī); च and; योगी a Yogī (Karmayogī); च and; निरग्निः he who has merely renounced the sacred fire; न (is) no Saṁnyāsī; न च nor; अक्रियः he who has merely given up all activity (is a Yogī).

Śrī Bhagavān said: he who does his duty without expecting the fruit of actions is a Saṁnyāsī (Sāṅkhyayogī) and a Yogī (Karmayogī) both. He is no Saṁnyāsī (renouncer) who has merely renounced the sacred fire; even so he is no Yogī, who has merely given up all activity. (1)

Although the Lord says nothing in this verse about renunciation of attachment, and speaks only of giving up dependence on the fruit of actions, the former should be taken as implied in the latter type of renunciation. For he who possesses attachment for

enjoyments or actions cannot wholly renounce dependence on the fruit of actions. Attachment naturally stimulates desire for the fruit of actions. Therefore, he who has given up dependence on the fruit of actions should be understood to have given up attachment as well. Everything is not expressly mentioned every time, and whatever is omitted in a particular context should be taken as implied by its mention elsewhere. Where renunciation of the desire for fruit is mentioned without any reference to renunciation of attachment (II.51; XVIII.11), the latter type of renunciation as well should be understood as implied therein. Similarly, where renunciation of attachment is mentioned without any reference to renunciation of the desire for fruit (III.19; VI.4), the latter should be regarded as implied.

All enjoyments of this world and the next, such as the possession of a wife, progeny, wealth, honour, fame and the enjoyments of heaven etc., should be treated as included in the fruit of actions. Whatever an ordinary man does, he does it with reference to a particular motive or fruit. That is why his actions throw him repeatedly into the whirligig of births and deaths. Therefore, regarding all enjoyments of this world and the next as transient, momentary and a source of suffering, one should wholly give up attachment, the sense of possession and the desire for fruit. This is what is meant here by renunciation of dependence on the fruit of actions.

All good actions, such as the performance of sacrifice and the practice of charity and austerities, as well as those performed either for keeping the body and soul together or in the interest of the public with due regard to one's order in society and stage in life, and sanctioned by the scriptures, are all worthy actions. They should always be duly, earnestly and diligently performed in accordance with the scriptural ordinance, and as a matter of duty, to the best of one's ability.

A Karmayogī of this type, having renounced all thoughts of the world, attains that true Knowledge which is the fruit of both the disciplines of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga. That is why he is regarded as partaking of the virtues of both the Sāṅkhyayogī and the Karmayogī.

The word 'Niragniḥ' denotes one who has entered the order of Saṁnyāsa through renunciation of the sacred fire. He who having renounced the sacred fire has entered the order of Saṁnyāsa, but has not been able to develop in himself the characteristies of a Jñānayogī, is no Saṁnyāsī in the true sense of the term; for he has renounced only the sacred fire and not the sense of doership in respect of all his actions nor the feeling of mineness, attachment and his self-identification with the body. This is what the Lord means when He says that "he is no Saṁnyāsī, who has merely renounced the sacred fire."

The word 'Akriyaṇ' stands for one who has totally abandoned all forms of activity and is wholly absorbed in meditation. He is no Yogī in the real sense of the term, who having abandoned all activities has taken to meditation, but whose mind is full of evils like egoism, the feeling of possession, likes and dislikes, and desire; for he too has renounced only external activities, and not the feeling of mineness, egotism, attachment, desire and anger etc. This is what the Lord means when He says that "he is no Yogī, who has not given up thoughts of the world."

Contrary to this, he who has entered the order of Saṁnyāsa having totally renounced the sacred fire and at the same time possesses all the marks of a Jñānayogī as described in verses 8,9,13,24,25 and 26 of Chapter V, is

the ideal Saṁnyāsī. It is only to bring out the glory of such great souls among Saṁnyāsīs that even non-Saṁnyāsīs manifesting in themselves the characteristics of a Jñānayogī are given the honorific title of 'Saṁnyāsī. There can be no other reason for calling them Saṁnyāsīs.

Even so he who having renounced all activities remains constantly engaged in meditation and whose mind is altogether free from evils like the sense of possession, likes and dislikes, lust and anger, and who has thus given up all thoughts of the world, is an ideal Yogī.

In the preceding verse the Lord called him who does his duty without reference to its fruit both a Saṁnyāsī and a Yogī. In this connection it may be asked: If 'Saṁnyāsa' and 'Yoga' represent two different states, how can it be possible for the Sādhaka referred to above to possess the characteristics of both? The question is answered in the next verse, which establishes identity between 'Saṁnyāsa' and 'Yoga':—

यं सन्न्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव।
न ह्यसन्न्यस्तसङ्कल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन॥ २॥

पाण्डव O son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; **यम्** which; **सन्न्यासम् इति** as Saṁnyāsa; **प्राहुः** they speak of; **तम्** that; **योगम्** (to be the same as) Yoga; **विद्धि** you know; **हि** for; **असन्न्यस्तसङ्कल्पः** who has not given up thoughts of the world; **कश्चन** anyone; **योगी** a Yogī; **न भवति** does not become.

Arjuna, you must know that what they call Saṁnyāsa is no other than Yoga; for none becomes a Yogī, who has not given up thoughts of the world. (2)

To be established in identity with God, eradicating the sense of doership in respect of all activities of the body, senses and mind, is what is meant by 'Saṁnyāsa'. This represents the final stage in the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga. And 'Yoga' means the attainment of actionlessness, which is the highest stage of Karmayoga reached through renunciation of the sense of possession, attachment and desire. Thoughts of the world are totally absent in both these states, and the Supreme Reality or God whom the Sāṅkhyayogī attains is no other than the God attained by the Karmayogī. It is in this sense that 'Saṁnyāsa' and 'Yoga' have been declared in this verse as one.

The word 'Saṅkalpa' means indulging in thoughts of the world with the feeling of possession as well as in terms of likes and dislike. Total absence of such thoughts is what is implied by their renunciation.

Without wholly renouncing thoughts of the world, the mind cannot be completely united with God. That is why renunciation of thoughts of the world is indispensable for all aspirants. One Sādhaka retires to some secluded corner and takes to the practice of meditation on God with the help of Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, etc., another tries to remain constantly engaged in disinterested action for the sake of God and in obedience to His commands; while a third devotes a part of his time to the practice of meditation and a part to the performance of disinterested action. None of these can be called a Yogī or a Yogārūḍha (one who has climbed to the heights of Yoga), until and unless he has wholly renounced all thoughts of the world. Perfection in Yoga is attained by a Sādhaka only when freed from all attachment for actions and worldly objects he entirely renounces all thoughts of the world. A Sāṅkhyayogī too will become a Saṁnyāsī in the true sense of the term only when

his mind is altogether free from thoughts of the world. It is in this sense that Saṁnyās has been declared as one with Yoga.

Praising Karmayoga in these words, the Lord now goes on to point out the means of attaining it as well as its fruit:—

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते॥ ३॥

योगम् to the heights of Yoga; आरुरुक्षोः desirous of climbing; मुनेः to him who is given to contemplation; कर्म (disinterested) action; कारणम् a stepping-stone (to the attainment of Yoga); उच्यते is spoken of (as); योगारूढस्य तस्य for the same man when he is established in Yoga; शमः absence of all thoughts of the world; एव only; कारणम् the way (to blessedness); उच्यते is stated (to be).

To the contemplative soul who desires to climb to the heights of Karmayoga, disinterested action is spoken of as the stepping-stone; for the same man when he is established in Yoga, absence of all thoughts of the world is said to be the way to blessedness. (3)

The word 'Muneḥ' in this verse has been used with reference to the man who seeks to climb to the heights of Yoga as a means to God-realization. Hence it should be taken to mean the Sādhaka of a contemplative nature given to meditation on God.

The word 'Karma' includes all actions consistent with one's order in society, stage in life, and status, and enjoined by the scriptures. Performed without attachment and the desire for fruit, all such actions can prove helpful in the attainment of perfection in Yoga.

Although we concede that perfection in Yoga can be attained even by him who has renounced all actions and practises meditation in a secluded corner, it should be remembered in this connection that the practice of meditation in seclusion too is a form of mental activity. And the Sādhaka who thus retires into seclusion and practises meditation has all the same to perform bodily functions in the shape of answering the calls of nature, ablution, taking of food and drink and so on for the maintenance of his body. Therefore, it is quite reasonable to say that performance of duties consistent with one's order in society, stage in life, position and circumstances, without attachment and the desire for fruit is a stepping-stone to the attainment of perfection in Yoga. It was for this very reason that the Lord stated in verse 4 of Chapter III that one cannot attain freedom from action without entering upon action.

The word 'Śamaḥ' cannot be interpreted to mean actual renunciation of activity. For verses 2 and 4 both speak of renunciation of thoughts of the world. Etymologically also the word 'Śamaḥ' means attainment of tranquillity through control of the mind. The Gītā uses the word in the same sense in XVIII.42 as well. And thoughts of the world completely cease only when the mind has been brought under control and has attained tranquillity. Besides this it is not possible to renounce activity altogether. Therefore, it is but reasonable to interpret the word 'Śamaḥ' as meaning absence of thoughts of the world.

The word 'Kāraṇam' in the second half

of the verse used with reference of 'Śamaḥ' cannot be taken to mean the cause of or incentive to action. For the word 'Śamaḥ', as shown above, denotes tranquillity of mind in the form of absence of thoughts of the world. Such a tranquillity cannot be conducive to action. Whatever actions are done by the man who is established in Yoga are impelled only by his own Prārabdha or destiny or that of other beings. Therefore, it is not logical to hold 'Śamaḥ' to be the cause of action in his case. The only reasonable interpretation is to regard it as conducive to God-realization.

The preceding verse speaks of the 'Yogārūḍha' or one who is established in Yoga. One is naturally tempted to ask: What is the definition of 'Yogārūḍha'? The next verse answers this query by describing the marks of the man who is established in Yoga:—

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते।
सर्वसङ्कल्पसन्न्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते॥ ४॥

यदा when; न neither; इन्द्रियार्थेषु to the objects of senses; न nor; हि indeed; कर्मसु to actions; अनुषज्जते (one) feels attached; तदा then; सर्वसङ्कल्पसन्न्यासी one who has renounced all thoughts (of the world); योगारूढः established in Yoga; उच्यते is said (to be).

When a man ceases to have any attachment either for the objects of senses or for actions, and has renounced all thoughts of the world, he is said to have climbed to the heights of Yoga. (4)

Attachment is the root of desire (II.62). When one ceases to have attachment for sense-objects and actions, desire will cease automatically and as a matter of course. There can be no effect without cause. Therefore, absence of desire should be taken as implied in absence of attachment.

The word 'Sarvasaṅkalpasaṁnyāsī' does not mean one whose mind or thinking faculty has altogether ceased to operate. If 'Sarvasaṅkalpasaṁnyāsī' meant the suspender of all mental activities, description of the mental state of the 'Yogārūḍha' would become impossible. For he who has not attained that state has no idea as to what it means; while he who has attained it would be unable to describe it due to his mind having ceased to operate. Who is, then, to describe that indescribable state ? Moreover, in Chapter IV the Lord has stated in clear words that "he whose undertakings are free from desire and Saṅkalpa is called a sage" (IV.19); and it cannot be asserted that the exalted soul referred to in such glowing terms is one who has not yet attained Yoga. Therefore, it does not stand to reason that he who has renounced all Saṅkalpas is incapable of action. This proves that renunciation of Saṅkalpas does not mean cessation of all mental activities. The word 'Saṅkalpa' stands here for thoughts of the world which are tainted by the feeling of possession, attachment and aversion. It is the renunciation of such thoughts which is implied here by the word 'Sarvasaṅkalpa-saṁnyāsa'. Such renunciation does not interfere in any way with the scrupulous performance of action. Those in whose eyes there is no reality except God accept or reject a thing taking it to be nothing else than God. Such acceptance or renunciation on their part cannot be said to be impelled by thoughts of the nature pointed out above. Such action in the form of acceptance and rejection of objects can be performed even

by illumined souls. It is with reference to such illumined souls that the Lord says elsewhere that 'though engaged in all forms of activities, he dwells in Me" (VI.31).

Men are found attached not only to sense-enjoyments but to certain activities as well. Hence it was necessary to mention attachment for objects and actions separately. Attachment for action may linger even after one has given up attachment for sense-enjoyments; for we find thoughtless people attached even to vain pursuits. Therefore, in order to show total absence of attachment in the Yogārūḍha it was necessary to mention to absence of both kinds of attachments.

Describing thus the state of a 'Yogārūḍha' or perfection in Yoga, which leads to the attainment of the supreme State, the Lord now points out the duty of man encouraging him to attain that state:—

उद्धरेदात्मनाऽऽत्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत्।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः॥ ५॥

आत्मना by oneself, by one's own efforts; आत्मानम् oneself; उद्धरेत् should lift or rescue (from the ocean of metempsychosis); आत्मानम् oneself; न अवसादयेत् should not degrade; हि for; आत्मा एव one's own self; आत्मनः बन्धुः (is) one's friend; आत्मा एव (and) one's own self; आत्मनः रिपुः (is) one's enemy.

One should lift oneself by one's own efforts and should not degrade oneself; for one's own self is one's friend, and one's own self is one's enemy. (5)

Subject to ignorance, the embodied soul has been floundering in the mire of transmigration, which is full of sorrows, from time without beginning, and passing through various states of existence, good, bad and indifferent, undergoes terrible suffering of various kinds. Finding the Jīva in this miserable plight, the All-merciful Lord confers on him the rare boon of a human body,—which is the only body suitable for spiritual practice, and is therefore coveted even by gods,—and thus affords him a golden opportunity whereby he can by pursuing a course of spiritual discipline get out of the slough of metempsychosis even in one birth, if he so desires, and easily attain God, the embodiment of supreme Bliss.

Therefore, a man should take particular care that the rare opportunity vouchsafed to him in the shape of a human life is not thrown away, and should make the most of it by pursuing a course of discipline like Karmayoga, Sāṅkhyayoga or Bhaktiyoga. This is what is meant by lifting oneself by one's own efforts. Contrary to this, he who indulges in sinful deeds under the impulse of evils like attraction and repulsion, lust and anger, greed and infatuation, and is consequently deprived of the supreme fruit of human existence, viz., God-realization, and paves the way for birth in the lower forms of life like swine and dogs etc., is said to be degrading himself. The Upaniṣads present a ghastly picture of the doom of such souls, branding them as spiritual suicides.*

---

* असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसाऽऽवृताः। तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः॥

Those demoniac regions in the form of the lower forms of life, such as the swine, dogs and so on, and the infernal regions are enveloped in darkness (the darkness of ignorance). Those who commit suicide are condemned to them. *(Īśa Upaniṣad 3)*

Calling upon the Jīva to lift himself by his own efforts, the Lord assures him that Prārabdha or destiny, howsoever unpropitious it may be, does not stand in the way of one's progress. In other words, it lies in one's own hands to elevate or degrade oneself. Prārabdha has nothing to do with it. If a man exerts himself, he is sure to get out of the slough of degradation and attain to the highest summit of progress. Man should, therefore, constantly strive with the utmost care and diligence to elevate himself, lift himself from where he is. Completely renouncing attraction and repulsion, lust and anger, enjoyment of worldly objects, lethargy, negligence, as well as sinful conduct, he should practise virtues like sense-control, mind-control, forbearance, discrimination and dispassion. Giving up thoughts of the world, he should try to concentrate his mind on God with reverence and love, and should endeavour to realize God thorugh practices of adoration and meditation, service and association, with saints. And until this consummation is reached he should not recede an inch nor pause even for a moment. Pinning his faith on the Divine grace, he should not allow himself to falter in the least and taking his courage in both hands should patiently and resolutely press forward on the path of progress. Man's progress is measured by the extent to which he has been able to reform his nature and mend his ways. Progress or advance consists in reforming one's nature and mending one's ways; and contrary to this; debasement of one's nature and conduct constitutes degradation or fall.

Those whom one regards as one's friends due to attachments and worldly relations are really speaking no friends at all, inasmuch as they contribute to his bondage. Saints and holy men, and even selfless strivers on the spiritual path are no doubt one's true friends, inasmuch as they help one to attain freedom from bondage. But their friendship and good-will too is realized only when one takes the initiative by developing in one's heart genuine reverence and love for them and conceiving them to be one's true friends follows the line of conduct laid down by them. This makes it clear that one's own self is one's friend. Even so it is equally certain that one is harmed only by viewing another person as one's enemy. Otherwise none can cause any spiritual harm to any body. This proves that really speaking, one's own self is one's enemy. Really speaking he who strives to redeem himself is his own friend; and he who acts otherwise is his own enemy. Therefore man has no friend or enemy other than his own self. This is what the Lord means when He says that "one's own self is one's friend, and one's own self is one's enemy."

It has been pointed out above that one's own self is one's friend, and one's own self is one's enemy. In order to elucidate this point, the Lord now goes on to show what sort of man is his own friend, and what sort of man is his own enemy:—

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत्॥ ६ ॥

येन आत्मना the embodied soul by whom; **आत्मा** one's body taken together with the senses and mind; **जितः** (has been) conquered; **तस्य आत्मनः** to that embodied soul; **आत्मा एव** his own self; **बन्धुः** (is) the friend; **तु** and; or but; **अनात्मनः** to him who has not been able to conquer his self in the shape of mind, senses and body; **आत्मा एव** his very self; **शत्रुवत्** like an enemy; **शत्रुत्वे वर्तेत** behaves inimically.

One's own self is the friend of the soul by whom the lower self (consisting of the mind, senses and body) has been conquered; even so the very self of him who has not conquered his lower self behaves antagonistically like an enemy. (6)

Conquest of the body, senses and mind consists in their complete subjugation and subordination. This can be achieved through constant and repeated practice and cultivation of dispassion with discrimination. When the body, senses and mind have been so thoroughly trained and disciplined that they easily lend themselves to any practice to which they may be applied for the sake of God-realization, and refuse to be led astray, they may be regarded as having been completely subdued. He whose body, senses and mind are mastered easily redeems himself from the quagmire of worldly existence and attains the object of his life through realization of God, the embodiment of Supreme Bliss. That is why such a man is called his own friend.

Body, senses and mind collectively constitute the self, the lower self of man. He who has no control over these, that is to say, whose body, senses and mind are wayward and unruly and run after objects of enjoyment without any check or hindrance, and who cannot apply them according to his will to spiritual practices favourable to the attainment of his cherished goal, is referred to here by the word 'Anātmā' (one who is not self-possessed). A slave to his mind, senses and body, just like the ailing man who takes a forbidden diet, he performs acts which are antagonistic to his spiritual welfare. Due to egoism and the feeling of possession, attraction and repulsion, lust and anger, greed and infatuation and so on, he falls a victim to error, sloth and self-indulgence, and thereby throws round his feet the shackles of sinful acts. And just as an enemy robs a man of the means of happiness and compels him to go through misery and suffering, even so instead of applying his body, senses and mind to spiritual practices he devotes them to sense—enjoyments and throwing himself again and again into hell and subjecting himself to repeated birth in various forms of life compels himself to undergo terrible suffering for an indefinite period of time. Since no one hates one's own self, one cannot really mean ill to one-self; nevertheless, blinded by ignorance and under the influence of attachment one begins to regard suffering as happiness and evil as good, and sets about marring one's own real interests. This is what is meant by the statement that "his very self behaves antagonistically like his enemy".

In order to make it clear how one who has mastered his body, mind and senses is his own friend, the next verse goes to point out the fruit of subduing the self in the shape of the body, mind and senses:—

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः॥ ७॥

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु in the midst of cold and heat and joy and sorrow; तथा as well as; मानापमानयोः in the midst of honour and ignominy; जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य (in the consciousness) of the self-controlled man who is perfectly serene; परमात्मा God or the Supreme Spirit (the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss); समाहितः (is) rooted.

The Supreme Spirit is rooted in the knowledge of the self-controlled man

whose mind is perfectly serene in the midst of pairs of opposites, such as cold and heat, joy and sorrow, and honour and ignominy. (7)

The words 'heat and cold', 'joy and sorrow' and 'honour and ignominy' are only symbolical. They stand here for all worldly objects, experiences and events connected with the body, mind and senses. The state of mind referred to in this verse is the one in which contact with or passing away of any object or experience or occurrence does not produce any unhealthy reaction on the mind in the shape of attraction and aversion, joy and grief, desire, fear, jealousy, lust, anger, distraction etc. In this state the mind remains equipoised and unruffled under all circumstances.

He who has mastered his body, senses and mind can remain calm, and above all modifications of the mind at every time and under all circumstances, and can realize God and thereby redeem himself from the quagmire of mundane existence. Therefore, he is his own friend. This is what is intended to be conveyed by this verse.

The word 'Samāhitaḥ' shows that in the eyes of such a man God is ever present everywhere and perceptibly pervades every atom.

It has been pointed out above that conquest of body, senses and mind leads to God-realization. This naturally leads one to enquire the marks of a God-realized soul. The next two verses, therefore, describe the marks of a God-realized soul, and thus glorify him:—

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥ ८ ॥

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा whose mind is stated with Jñāna (Knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma or Absolute Reality) and Vijñāna (Knowledge of Manifest Divinity of Saguṇa Brahma); कूटस्थः (who is) unmoved under all circumstances; विजितेन्द्रियः whose senses are completely mastered; समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः to whom earth, stone and gold are all alike; योगी (such) a Yogī; युक्तः united with God or God-realized; इति as; उच्यते is spoken of.

The Yogī whose mind is stated with Jñāna (Knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma) and Vijñāna (Knowledge of Manifest Divinity), who is unmoved under all circumstances, whose senses are completely mastered, and to whom earth, stone and gold are all alike, is spoken of as a God-realized soul. (8)

The word 'Jñāna' stands here for true Knowledge of, and insight into, the glory and greatness of the formless and attributeless aspect of God; whereas 'Vijñāna' means true Knowledge of formless God with attributes as well as of God endowed with a form, and His sports, secret, glory, greatness and virtues etc. He who has thoroughly grasped the true nature of both the qualified and unqualified, as well as the manifest and unmanifest aspects of God, and who has no desire left in him to know anything more, is referred to here by the adjective 'Jñānavijñānatṛptātmā'.

The word 'Kūṭa' denotes the smith's anvil, which has to bear repeated hammer blows and yet remains firm and unshaken. Even so he who remains firm and unshaken in the face of the greatest sorrows and sufferings of various kinds and whose mind is no longer subject to any unhealthy reactions, and who is ever firmly established

in God, is referred to here by the adjective 'Kūṭasthaḥ'.

Having realized all objects of the world as illusory and fleeting such a man ceases to have the least attachment for any of them. Finding no relish in worldly objects, his senses, therefore, recoil from such objects and embrace only those objects to which he directs them according to his own will and discretion in the interests of the world order. They neither act nor move independently, nor create any disturbance in the mind. These are the marks of one whose senses are completely mastered.

As he sees God in everything, earth, stone and gold make no difference to him. He feels no special attraction for gold as one who is merged in ignorance does, nor does he entertain any aversion for earth and stone, but regards all of them as equal. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the adjective 'Samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ'.

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥ ९ ॥

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु upon well-wishers, friends, foes, neutrals, mediators, the objects of hatred and relatives; **साधुषु** upon the virtuous; **च** and; **पापेषु** on the sinful; **अपि** as well; **समबुद्धिः** he who looks with the same eye; **विशिष्यते** stands supreme.

He who looks upon well-wishers and neutrals as well as mediators, friends and foes, relatives and objects of hatred, the virtuous and the sinful with the same eye, stands supreme. (9)

A 'Suhṛd' or well-wisher is one who is naturally disposed to love and oblige others without any motive or condition and without expecting any return for his services and love; whereas 'friendship' involves mutual benevolence and service. That is the difference between a friend and a well-wisher.

Even so an 'Ari' or foe is he who seeks or tries to harm under provocation, and a 'Dveṣya' or object of hatred is he who behaves inimically without any rhyme or reason and thus provokes hatred or aversion.

A 'Madhyastha' or mediator is he who intervenes between two contending parties with a view to reconciling them and tries to do justice to both by impartial judgement; while an 'Udāsīna' or neutral is he who is absolutely unconcerned or unconnected with either.

One is naturally apt to be partial to one's well-wishers and friends, neutrals, mediators, men of virtue and one's own relatives. Even so one is naturally inclined to entertain a feeling of aversion or hatred for foes, objects of hatred and sinful persons. Men of judgment and reason too are found to have a natural attraction for the former and a natural aversion for the latter. It is exceedingly difficult to be free from attraction and repulsion with respect to types of men so diametrically opposed to one another in nature, and to lose all sense of distinction between them. He who looks upon these two antagonistic types of men with the same eye will have no difficulty in maintaining such in attitude on respect of all others. It is in order to bring out this point, that the Lord has used the word 'Api' in this verse.

Since such a man sees God everywhere and in all beings, the differences of conduct, nature and behaviour or such diverse types of men as friends and foes, saints and sinners, fail to produce any reaction on his mind. In other words, the idea of diversity

never enters his mind under any circumstances and on any account whatsoever. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by the word 'Samabuddhiḥ'.

In verse 6 it has been stated that he who has conquered his 'self' in the form of the body, senses and mind is his own friend; and verse 7 stated that the Jītātmā or the self-controlled man realized the supreme Spirit. Again, verses 8 and 9 described the marks of the God-realized soul and praised him. The question, therefore, naturally arises: What should the 'Jītātmā' do to realize God? How can he attain his goal speedily? Anticipating this question, the subject of Dhyānayoga is taken up for discussion:—

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः॥ १०॥

यतचित्तात्मा who has controlled his body along with the mind and senses; **निराशीः** who is free from desires; **अपरिग्रहः** who is void of possessions; **योगी** the Yogī; **एकाकी** all by himself; **रहसि** in seclusion; **स्थितः** living; **आत्मानम्** his mind; **सततम्** constantly; **युञ्जीत** should engage (in meditation on God).

Living in seclusion all by himself, the Yogī who has controlled his mind and body, and is free from desires and void of possessions, should constantly engage his mind in meditation. (10)

'Nirāśiḥ' is one who neither seeks nor needs in the least degree any object of enjoyment of this world or the next in any form and under any circumstances whatsoever.

Accumulation of objects of enjoyment is known as 'Parigraha'. 'Aparigraha', therefore, means one who has renounced all objects of enjoyment. A householder will be known as 'Aparigraha even if he stocks things provided he does not claim them as his own. As for a Brahmacārī (one who dwells in the house of a preceptor as a student with a vow of strict celibacy and discipline), a Vānaprastha (one who leads a life of austere penance in a forest) and a Saṁnyāsī (a recluse or hermit who has renounced the world) they should on no account possess anything which the scriptures do not permit them to possess.

The word 'Yogī' in this verse does not refer to one who has attained perfection in Yoga, but to the Sādhaka who is qualified to practise Dhyānayoga, inasmuch he is asked in this verse to practise meditation.

It is most difficult to practise meditation in the midst of a crowd. Nay, even the presence of another individual is apt to involve the Sādhaka in talk with him and thus interfere with his practice. That is why meditation should be practised all alone. This is the significance of the adjective 'Ekākī' used in the verse.

Only secluded places like the forest or a mountain cave are suitable for the practice of meditation. The practice of Dhyānayoga is not possible in a place which is frequented by many people. That is why the verse calls upon the Sādhaka to live in seclusion for the practice of meditation.

The word 'Ātmā' in this verse stands for the mind and intellect, which are collectively known as the inner sense or Antaḥkaraṇa. Absorption of the mind and intellect in the thought of God is what is meant by engaging them in meditation.

The word 'Satatam' signifies that nothing should be allowed to come in the

way of one's meditation. The practice should be unbroken in nature, i.e., without a gap or diversion in the flow of one single thought.

The self-controlled man has been advised to practise Dhyānayoga. Proceeding therefore, to describe the practice in detail the Lord now discusses the question of the place and posture suited to the practice in the following verse:—

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः।
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम्॥ ११॥

शुचौ देशे in a place free from dirt and other impurities; चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् with Kuśa grass, a deerskin and cloth spread thereon one below another; नात्युच्छ्रितम् neither very elevated; नातिनीचम् nor very low; आत्मनः his; आसनम् seat; स्थिरम् firmly; प्रतिष्ठाप्य having placed.

Having firmly placed his seat in a spot which is free from dirt and other impurities with the sacred Kuśa grass, a deerskin and a cloth spread thereon one below another (Kuśa below, deerskin in the middle and cloth uppermost), neither very high nor very low. (11)

The spot selected for the practice of Dhyānayoga should not only have clean surroundings, but should have been swept of all dust, smeared all over with cowdung, clay or any other natural disinfectant and purifying substance or rubbed and washed, and thus cleaned of all dirt and defilement. A suitable place on the bank of sacred rivers like the Gangā and the Yamunā, a mountain-cave, a temple, a place of pilgrimage or a garden or anyother place having a pure atmosphere, which may be easily obtained, and is clean, undefiled and secluded, should be selected by the Sādhaka for the practice of meditation.

The word 'Āsana' in this verse denotes a seat made of either a wooden plank, or a slab of stone, on which one can conveniently sit for some length of time. If the seat is too elevated, the Sādhaka in the course of meditation has the risk of dropping down from it and getting hurt in the event of his meditation being disturbed by languor or sleep. And if it is too low, it will allow a free passage to heat and cold of the floor and to small insects like ants etc., which may interfere with his meditation. Hence the Lord says that the seat should be neither very high nor very low. Again, a seat made of wood or stone having a hard surface is likely to set one's legs aching. Hence the Lord lays down that in order to make the seat soft it should be spread all over with Kuśa grass in the first instance, and the Kuśa grass covered by a deerskin, and a piece of cloth should be spread on the deerskin*. The Kuśa grass placed below the deerskin will protect the deerskin from decay and the piece of cloth spread on the deerskin will prevent the hair of the deerskin from sticking to the body. Hence it is that the Lord advises the Sādhaka to spread all the three, in due succession, on one's seat.

The word 'Ātmanaḥ' shows that the seat should be one's own. One should not use another's seat for the practice of meditation. That is why the word 'Ātmanaḥ' has been used with the word 'Āsanam' or seat.

* When selecting the deerskin one should make sure that the skin belongs to an animal who died a natural death, and not of one which was deliberately killed. A skin obtained through destruction of life can never be helpful in spiritual practice.

The seat should be firmly and properly adjusted on the floor, so that it may not shake or move. For movement or shaking is likely to interfere with one's practice. That is what is meant by the words 'Sthiram Pratiṣṭhāpya'.

The following verse lays down what the Sādhaka of Dhyānayoga should do next after firmly placing his seat in a neat and tidy spot.

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः।
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये॥ १२॥

तत्र आसने on that seat; उपविश्य sitting; यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः having controlled the functions of the mind and senses; मनः the mind; एकाग्रम् कृत्वा concentrating; आत्मविशुद्धये for self-purification; योगम् Yoga; युञ्ज्यात् should practise.

And occupying that seat, concentrating the mind and controlling the functions of the mind and senses, he should practise Yoga for self-purification. (12)

The posture of the body which a Sādhaka should maintain while practising meditation has been dealt with in the next verse. Consistent with those principles, he may adopt either the Swastika, Siddha, or Padma posture of the legs, or any other posture which is convenient and easy for him to maintain for a sufficient length of time. That is why the present verse speaks in a general way of occupying the seat, and does not mention any particular posture to be adopted by him.

The word 'Citta' represents the mind and intellect both, otherwise known as the inner sense. The function of the mind and intellect is to think and ascertain. When they altogether cease to think of and ascertain the objects of the world, and completely withdraw themselves from the same, one is said to have controlled their functions. The term 'Indriya' stands for the ten organs of perception and action. Suspension of all their activities is what is meant by sense-control.

Concentration of mind means focussing the mind on the object of meditation. In the present context, the object of meditation is God. Therefore, the verse speaks of concentrating the mind on God. This has been made clear by the Lord Himself in verse 14 by the use of the adjective 'Maccittaḥ' (having the mind fixed on Me).

The Lord further says that meditation should be practised for purification of the self. The intention of this statement is to bring home to the Sādhaka that the attainment of any form of worldly glory or worldly success should not be the object of the practice of meditation. The practice should be undertaken for the eradication of evil propensities and imperfections like attraction, repulsion and sins resulting therefrom, as well as of ignorance and distraction, and with the sole object of realizing God.

In the preceding verse the Sādhaka has been advised to practise Dhyānayoga. In order to throw further light on the subject the next two verses lay down in detail how the Sādhaka should sit, what mental outlook he should have, what rules he should observe, and how and what he should meditate on:—

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः।
सम्प्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन्॥ १३॥

कायशिरोग्रीवम् the trunk, head and neck; समम् straight; च and; अचलम् steady; धारयन् keeping; स्थिरः (remaining) firm; स्वम् his; नासिकाग्रम् the tip of nose; सम्प्रेक्ष्य fixing the gaze on; दिशः (in other directions); अनवलोकयन् not looking.

Holding the trunk, head and neck straight and steady, remaining firm and fixing the gaze on the tip of his nose, without looking in other directions. (13)

Keeping the spinal column erect and bringing the trunk, neck and head in a straight line without bending or moving any of these limbs is what is meant by keeping them straight and steady.

The use of the word 'Sthiraḥ' over and above this, shows that other parts of the body, such as the hands and feet should also be kept steady and should not be moved; for the movement of any limb is not desirable in the course of meditation, as it is likely to divert the mind from the object of meditation.

The gaze should be fixed on the tip of the nose. This means that the eyes should neither be closed, nor allowed to look in all directions. The object of fixing the gaze on the point of the nose is to avoid distraction and dozing. The mind, however, has to be fixed on God and in no case on the point of the nose.

Sleep, lethargy, distraction and pairs of opposites like heat and cold are considered as obstacles in the practice of Dhyānayoga. These evils can be easily avoided by adopting the means suggested in this verse. The possibility of an attack of sleep and lethargy is ruled out by holding the trunk, head and neck straight and steady, and by keeping the eyes open. Fixing of the gaze at the tip of the nose and refusing to look about precludes the possibility of distraction by external objects, and firmness in posture removes the fear of interference by pairs of opposites like heat and cold. That is why the Lord lays down that one should sit as stated above for the practice of meditation.

Whether one meditates on the Saguṇa (Qualified) or Nirguṇa (Absolute) aspect of God depends on the aptitude and qualification of the Sādhaka. The directions given above apply equally to both the forms of meditation.

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः।
मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः॥ १४॥

ब्रह्मचारिव्रते to the vow of continence; स्थितः pledged; विगतभीः free from fear; प्रशान्तात्मा (and) keeping himself perfectly calm; युक्तः the vigilant yogī; मनः the mind; संयम्य holding in restraint; मच्चित्तः with the mind fixed on Me; मत्परः absorbed in Me; आसीत should sit.

Firm in the vow of complete chastity and fearless, keeping himself perfectly calm and with the mind held in restraint and fixed on Me, the vigilant Yogī should sit absorbed in Me. (14)

Though the word 'Brahmacarya' essentially means some thing else, conserving the vital fluid or observing complete chastity constitutes one of its main senses; and it is this sense which fits in with the present context as well. The vital fluid is an invaluable thing in the possession of man, which should be carefully preserved in order to gain and conserve bodily, mental and spiritual strength. That is why among the four Āśramas or stages of life forming one of the main pillars of the Āryan

cultural organization, Brahmacarya or student life (which is a symbol of chastity and is invariably associated with strict celibacy) is the very first Āśrama, and the foundation of the other three Āśramas *viz.*, married life, a life of austerity and seclusion, and renunciation). The Brahmacārī, or the student who has taken the vow of celibacy, has to follow a number of rules which are exceedingly helpful in the observance of complete chastity. The vital fluid duly preserved through the practice of Brahmacarya generates a peculiar electric current in the body which is so brilliant and powerful that its very radiance makes the breath and mind steady, and thought begins automatically to flow in one unbroken current towards the object of meditation. This unbroken unity of the current of thought is called meditation. Nowadays people generally fail in their attempt to practise meditation, because they cannot fix their mind on the object of meditation. One of the main reasons why they cannot do so is that they have not preserved the vital fluid through observance of Brahmacarya. Leading a regulated life of self-restraint in the married state is also a form of Brahmacarya, and is very helpful in the practice of meditation; but he who has scrupulously observed the vow of Brahmacarya from the very beginning of adult life, and has not suffered any loss of the vital fluid, will find it very easy to attain speedy success in the practice of meditation. The Code of Manu and other scriptures lay down an ideal code of conduct for the Brahmacārī. The following are some of the main items of the Code: "The Brahmacārī should take a bath daily, should not use an unguent, eye-salve, oil or perfumery; he should not wear a wreath of flowers or ornaments, should not participate in music and dance, should not have shoes on his feet nor use an umbrella; he should not sleep on a cot or participate in gambling; he should not look at women nor ever indulge in talk of women. He should be regular and simple in his diet should not have soft clothes on his body, should worship gods and Ṛṣis and serve and adore the preceptor. He should not enter into disputation with any body, nor speak ill of others; he should always speak the truth, should not insult another, should practise complete non-violence, should totally renounce lust, anger and greed, should sleep alone and should never allow any loss of the vital fluid." These, in short, constitute the rules of Brahmacarya. Speaking of the vow of Brahmacarya in the verse, the Lord also hints at the organization of society into the four Āśramas or stages of life. Conservation of the vital fluid is very essential even for those belonging to the other Āśramas who take to the practice of Dhyānayoga, and the above rules are exceedingly helpful in the practice of continence. This is what constitutes the vow of chastity and he who carefully observes the vow is said to be firm in it.

* * *

God is present everywhere, and the Yogī practising meditation wants to see God. Why, then, should he entertain any fear ? The Sādhaka should, therefore, remain fearless at the time of meditation. If he entertains the least fear in his mind, he will naturally feel distracted in a lonely place. During the meditation, therefore, the Sādhaka should hold the firm and right belief that God is almighty, and being ubiquitous, is always present by his side, and that in His presence there can be no cause for fear. Even if due to Prārabdha the Sādhaka accidentally meets with death during his meditation, such a death will eventually bring him the highest good. A true Dhyānayogī will hold firmly to

this view; that is why the verse speaks of him as 'fearless'*.

*   *   *

At the time of meditation all evil propensities like attraction and repulsion, joy and grief, lust and anger, and all worldly thoughts and doubts should be driven out of the mind. In this way the mind should be purged of all impurities and made serene with the help of dispassion. This is what is meant by the adjective 'Praśāntātmā' used in the verse.

The Yogī practising meditation should be on his guard against sleep, lethargy, carelessness and other such obstacles. If he is ever lax, his mind and senses may hoodwink him and create obstacles in meditation. The adjective 'Yuktaḥ' has been used to bring out this point.

The mind is fickle and elusive by nature. It will not stick to one object and will try to elude our grasp and run away if we try to restrain it. Practice of Dhyānayoga is impossible without controlling the mind. Therefore, withdrawing the mind completely from external objects at the time of meditation and fixing it exclusively on the object of meditation, or in other words, merging it in God is what is meant by bringing the mind thoroughly under control.

A continuous flow of thought towards one object is called meditation. What should be the object of one's meditation? This is made clear by the Lord when He says, "The mind has to be fixed on Me." The mind automatically clings to the object of its true love. The Yogī practising meditation should, therefore, obtain an insight into the virtues, glory, truth and mystery of God, who is our best friend, greatest well-wisher and the supreme object of love, and withdrawing his love from the world; should treat Him alone as the goal and try to fix his mind exclusively on Him.

He who seeks to concentrate his mind on God, taking Him to be his goal, must naturally be devoted to God. Therefore, by using the word 'Matparaḥ' (devoted to Me), the Lord intends to show that the Sādhaka following the path of Meditation should take Him alone to be his supreme goal, supreme refuge, supreme support, supreme Lord and the supreme object of love and should always depend on Him and should welcome every dispensation of the Lord, regarding Him as his sole and supreme protector, helper, lord, nay, his very soul, life-breath and everything. This is what is meant by being 'devoted to God'.

The use of the words 'Maccittaḥ' (with his mind fixed on Me) and 'Matparaḥ' (devoted to Me) indicates that meditation on the Absolute aspect of God as one with the meditator is not intended to be referred to here. Therefore, it should be understood that the verse describes the process of meditation on the Saguṇa aspect of God treating the object of meditation as distinct from the meditator.

But does that Saguṇa aspect represent the formless aspect of the Almighty and All-supporting God, or one of His manifestations as Śrī Śaṁkara, Śrī Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or any other embodied form of the Lord ? The answer to this is that the Sādhaka should meditate on the form of God on which he can easily fix his mind according to his own aptitude, temperament and qualifications, understanding fully the virtues glory, truth and mystery of God†.

* आनन्द ब्रह्मणो विद्वान्न बिभेति कुतश्चन।

† The virtues, glory, truth and mystery of God cannot be precisely stated or exhausted. Whatever is stated with regard to them is like revealing the sun by means of an earthly light. Nevertheless, the least remembrance, hearing and chanting of God's glory and virtues possess purifying properties of the first magnitude. That is why the scriptures undertake to describe them. In the light of the scriptures, they may be understood as follows:—

For God is one, and all these forms and manifestations are His own. Therefore, it would be wrong to imagine that the verse advocates meditation on a particular form or aspect of God.

For the Knowledge and guidance of the Sādhaka, verbal images are given below of a few embodied forms of God:—

MEDITATION ON BHAGAVĀN ŚAṀKARA IN A TRANCE

In a most secluded spot on the famous peak of the Himālayas known as Mount Gaurīśaṁkara, Bhagavān Śiva is sitting cross-legged in the pose termed as Padmāsana, absorbed in meditation. The colour of His body is exceptionally white with a light touch of red spread over it. His body is motionless, straight and tall. The ashy Tripuṇḍra (a mark consisting of three horizontal lines with a vertical line crossing them in the middle) adorns His extensive forehead; the tufts of matted hair on His head, reddish brown in colour, are tied with snakes after the fashion of a braid. Small garlands of the Rudrākṣa bead encircle both His ears. The dark colour of the bear-skin which is wrapped round His body is heightened by the blue lustre emanating from His throat. His three eyes (the third being in the centre of the forehead) have their gaze fixed on the point of the nose. A bright light is emanating from His steady and motionless eyes, which is diffused all round. The palms of His hands lying crosswise on His lap look like a full-blown lotus.

In the state of Samādhi He has suspended all the functions of the vital airs within His body, which has given Him the appearance of an unassuming cloud, full of water and about to discharge showers, or of a calm and waveless ocean, or a bright and steady light placed in a spot protected from winds.

MEDITATION ON BHAGAVĀN VIṢṆU

On the lotus of the Sādhakas own heart, or on a thousand-petalled red lotus in front of him a little above the ground, stands Bhagavān Viṣṇu heightening the beauty of the lotus by His presence. The colour of His body resembles that of the rainy cloud; all His limbs are exquisitely beautiful and adorned with ornaments of various kinds. A heavenly odour emanates from His Divine Body. Wearing a serene look His moon-like face is brimming with beauty. He has four long and beautiful arms. His neck and rosy cheeks are exceptionally beautiful and captivating; an enchanting smile adorns His face; His ruddy lips and aquiline nose are simply enthralling. Crocodile-shaped ear-rings adorn both His ears. The chin is most beautiful to look

---

Infinite and boundless equability, serenity, compassion, love, forgiveness, sweetness, parental affection, gravity, generosity, friendliness etc., of a transcendental type constitute the virtues of God. Consummate strength, majesty, dignity, energy, prowess, and capacity to accomplish what is impossible, form part of the 'glory' of God. Just as the atom of water, vapour, cloud, rain-drop and hail-stone,—all these are the same as water, even so the Saguṇa and Nirguṇa aspects of God. God in form and formless God, the manifest and unmanifest, matter and spirit, the animate and inanimate creation, the real and the unreal—all these, and whatever lies beyond these, are God Himself. This is the 'truth' relating to God. The sight of God's Form, exchange of words with Him, the touch of His person, thinking of Him and chanting His Name and glories and praise, worship and obeisance offered to Him confer the highest sanctity even on the vilest sinner God Himself, who is unborn and imperishable, omniscient as well as omnipotent, and equally existent everywhere, and who is the supreme Lord of all the worlds, manifests Himself in a divine form, and His divine virtues, glory and truth etc. are really speaking so incomprehensible, infinite and transcendent that none but Him can know them in their entirety and reality. Herein lies His 'mystery'.

at. His large and beautiful eyes resembling a pair of lotuses are two perennial founts of compassion, love, tranquillity, equability, knowledge, bliss and light. The shoulders are a bit elevated. A piece of fine silk of a golden hue is wrapped round His blue Body and presents a beautiful contrast with it. The Śrīvatsa mark (a golden streak) adorns His chest which is the abode of Lakṣmī, the Goddess of wealth. Of His two right hands, the upper one bears the bright circular weapon, Cakra, and the lower one holds the celebrated club, Kaumodakī. Similarly, the upper left hand holds the large white conch named Pāñcajanya, which ever brings victory to Him, while the lower left hand has a beautiful red lotus. A necklace of jewels adorns His neck; and a garland of sylvan flowers with leaves of the Tulasī plant interspersed with them, the Vaijayantī garland and the diamond known as Kaustubha play, fully hang on His breast. His feet are adorned with bejewelled anklets making a jingling sound, and the head with a brilliant diadem. His broad, elevated and bright forehead bears the beautiful mark known as 'Ūrdhvapuṇḍra' (consisting of two vertical lines joined by a curved line at the base. His wrists, arms, waist and fingers are adorned with bejewelled bangles, armlets, zones and rings respectively. His dark, curly hair is most beautiful to look at. A brilliant lustre surrounds His form,—a lustre as bright as the light of myriads of sun appearing together and yet cool,—and throws out infinite currents of love and bliss.

MEDITATION ON BHAGAVĀN ŚRĪ RĀMA

On a bejewelled throne of exceptional beauty sits Bhagavān Śrī Rāmacandra together with His divine Consort, Śrī Sītā. Possessed of the colour of fresh green turf, large eyes resembling a pair of lotuses and an enchanting face, He bears the mark known as Ūrdhvapuṇḍra on His broad forehead. The dark and curly hair on His head are covered by a diadem as bright as the sun. His lovely and graceful form fascinates even the mind of ascetics who have renounced the world and is covered with a piece of fine silk of golden hue. A necklace of jewels and a garland of heavenly flowers hang round His neck. His body is daubed with sandal-paste. He wields a bow and an arrow in His hands; His rosy lips are brightened by a sweet smile. On His left hand sits His consort Śrī Sītā, possessed of a bright golden colour, wearing a blue Śārī and holding a red lotus in Her hand. Divine ornaments adorn Her limbs. The charm of the Divine Pair is in comparable and fascinates the eye.

MEDITATION ON BHAGAVĀN ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA

The scene is laid on the bank of the Jumunā in Vṛndāvana. In a bower of Aśoka trees adorned with new leaves stands Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the midst of His playmates, the cowherd boys. The colour of His Body is blue with a swarthy tinge about it like that of a newly-formed cloud, and the yellow silk on His swarthy Form appears like the rainbow in a dark cloud. The garland of sylvan flowers hanging from His neck radiates the sweet smell of flowers and Tulasī leaves. The Vaijayantī garland adorns His chest. Curly locks of dark and glossy hair hang about His rosy cheeks. His lotus-like face is exceptionally beautiful and fascinates the three worlds. A sweet smile is playing on His ruddy lips. A crown of peacock-feathers adorns His lovely head; a pair of bright earrings hang from His ears radiating their light on His glossy cheeks. His lovely Form is scattering beauty all

round. Sticking Karṇikāra flowers in both His ears, He has painted His body with weird minerals and has adorned it with new leaves of various colours. There is the Śrīvatsa mark on His breast, and the Kaustubha gem hangs from His neck. His eye-brows are strung like the bow, His rosy lips are exceedingly soft and beautiful. The lotus-like eyes are large and slanting. They are radiating powerful currents of love and ecstasy which attract everybody and inspire a flood of love and joy in every heart. Standing with three charming bends in His divine Body, He is playing a sweet tune on His flute, rapidly moving His agile and soft fingers on its holes.

MEDITATION ON BHAGAVĀN ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA

(2)

The scene is laid on the battle field of Kurukṣetra; heroes armed to the teeth stand in battle-array at their respective posts to participate in the memorable conflict. In the midst of them all the huge and glorious chariot of Arjuna is drawn up. The flag of the chariot hanging from a high pole glitters with the marks of the moon and stars. The great devotee and hero Śrī Hanumān is seated on the flag, and there are smaller flags waving in the air on all sides of the chariot. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is seated on the fore part of the chariot. Dark blue in colour, He is the very acme of beauty. Dressed like a warrior and hero with armour on, He can be easily distinguished by the yellow silk He wears on His body. His countenance is the very embodiment of serenity. The light of wisdom illumines every pore of His body. His large and reddish eyes scatter the light of Knowledge. He holds the reins of the horses in one hand, and the other is raised in the mystic posture known as Jñānamudrā (with the thumb and the first finger joined together, and the other fingers disjoined from them) as He delivers to Arjuna with great serenity, composure and presence of mind, the incomparable message of the Gītā. A sweet smile plays on His lips. By significant movements of His eyes He is explaining His viewpoint to Arjuna and dispelling the doubts of his mind.

The fruit of Dhyānayoga, practised as above, is stated below:—

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।
शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ १५ ॥

नियतमानसः of disciplined mind; योगी the Yogī; एवम् thus; आत्मानम् his mind; सदा constantly; युञ्जन् applying (to Me); मत्संस्थाम् abiding in Me; निर्वाणपरमाम् consisting of supreme Bliss; शान्तिम् everlasting Peace; अधिगच्छति attains.

Thus constantly applying his mind to Me, the Yogī of disciplined mind attains the everlasting peace, consisting of supreme bliss, which abides in Me. (15)

The word 'Niyatamānasaḥ' stands for one who has thoroughly disciplined his mind. Such a Sādhaka alone can practise Dhyānayoga, as stated above. This is brought out by the adjective 'Niyatamānasaḥ' used with the word 'Yogī'.

Constant application of the mind to God means ceaselessly dwelling on the reality of God through the mind and intellect, the mind flowing towards the object of meditation like the unbroken flow of oil, and getting merged into it.

The lasting Peace mentioned in this verse is the same which has been spoken

of elsewhere as 'peace in the shape of God-realization' (V.12), 'immortal peace' (IX.31) and 'supreme peace' (XVIII. 62), and which is also referred to as attainment of God, attainment of the Supreme Divine Person and attainment of the Supreme goal, and so on. This peace represents the acme of infinite and peerless joy and it constantly and unshakably abides in God, the greatest friend and well-wisher of the soul, the ocean of Bliss nay, the very embodiment of Bliss. It is this peace which the Sādhaka of Dhyānayoga eventually attains.

The practice of Dhyānayoga and its fruit have been described above. The next two verses lay down rules regarding diet, recreation, sleep, etc., suited to the practice of Dhyānayoga:—

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः।
न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन॥ १६॥

अर्जुन Arjuna; योगः (this) Yoga; न तु neither; अस्ति is; अत्यश्नतः for him who overeats; च न nor; एकान्तम् अनश्नतः for him who does not eat at all; च even so; न not; अतिस्वप्नशीलस्य for him who is given to excessive sleep; च न nor; जाग्रतः एव even for him who is (ceaselessly) awake.

Arjuna, this Yoga is neither for him who overeats, nor for him who observes a complete fast; it is neither for him who is given to too much sleep; nor even for him who is ceaselessly awake. (16)

The word 'Yoga' generally applies to all the paths leading to God-realization. But inasmuch as the subject of discussion in these verses is Dhyānayoga, the word 'Yoga' in the present verse should be treated as referring to Dhyānayoga, which roots out all suffering for ever, and leads to the attainment of God, the ocean of supreme Bliss and supreme Peace.

Eating too much induces sleep and lethargy and creates various disorders in the system through the accumulation of undigested matter. Even so relinquishing food altogether and observing total fasts occasionally entail a severe strain on one's energy of mind, senses and vital organs. In that state of all-round depletion of energy the Sādhaka can neither sit steadily in the posture referred to above for any length of time, nor can fix his mind on God. This interferes with his practice of meditation. It is, therefore, laid down that the Sādhaka of Dhyānayoga should neither eat too much or more than he can digest, nor observe a complete fast.

Similarly, a reasonable amount of sleep relieves exhaustion of the body and refreshes it; but if carried to excess, it produces dullness and makes one a constant victim of lethargy, so that he finds it difficult even to sit steadily for any length of time. Besides this, too much sleep obviously encroaches upon valuable moments of our human existence to no purpose, which itself is a serious loss. By keeping exaggerated vigils, on the other hand, one is never able to overcome exhaustion of body or attain freshness. The body, senses and vital organs get slack, the body falls a victim to disorders of various kinds, and is constantly under the spell of sleep and lethargy. In this way too much sleep and keeping exaggerated vigils both are harmful to the practice of Dhyānayoga. Therefore, in order to keep his

body in sound health and to avoid interference in his practice of Dhyānayoga, the Sādhaka should neither sleep too much when judged from the requirements of his body and his nature, health and age, nor should he abstain from sleep altogether.

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा॥ १७॥

दुःखहा योगः the Yoga which rids one of woe; **युक्ताहारविहारस्य** by him who is regulated in diet and recreation; **कर्मसु युक्तचेष्टस्य** by him who is regulated in performing actions; **युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य** by him who is regulated in sleep and wakefulness; **भवति** is accomplished.

Yoga, which rids one of woe, is accomplished only by him who is regulated in diet and recreation, regulated in performing actions, and regulated in sleep and wakefulness. (17)

Regulation of diet and recreation means the regulation, not only of their nature or kind but of their quantity or degree as well. For instance, food that one takes should be such as has been obtained by fair and legitimate means according to the rules laid down for one's order in society and stage in life, and as is allowed by the scriptures and possesses Sāttvika properties (XVII.8). It should not be such as tends to induce Rajas (excitement) and Tamas (inertia), and should be free from impurities and suited to one's nature, circumstances and taste, and helpful in the practice of Yoga. Its quantity too should strictly conform to one's requirements and best interests and should be determined with due regard to one's health and power of digestion as well as to the interests of one's spiritual practice. Even so recreation should be indulged in only to the extent it is necessary and useful for a particular individual, and should be innocent in character.

Regulated and reasonable diet and recreation tend to promote the quality of Sattva (harmony) in one's body, senses and mind, and enhance their purity, placidity and liveliness, all of which facilitate the practice of Dhyānayoga.

Duties enjoined by the scriptures with due regard to one's order in society, stage in life, condition, circumstances and environment constitute what is known as Karma or action. Such action when performed in the proper way and to a reasonable extent is called regulated action. For instance, actions like practice of devotion to God, worship of celestials, service of the indigent and distressed, offering of respect to parents, the preceptor and elders in general, performance of sacrifices, practice of charity and penance, actions contributory to the maintenance of one's body, such as begging of food, (for recluses and Brahmacārīs, etc.), study of scriptures and teaching them, and trade etc., and merely bodily action, such as taking of bath and answering the calls of nature etc.,—all these should be done as enjoined by the scriptures and approved of the virtuous, taking care that they encourage self-dependence and are helpful in the practice of Dhyānayoga without interfering with others' interest, or inflicting suffering or imposing a burden on another. These actions should be performed only to the extent they are necessary for the individual performing them, so that he may be able to maintain his existence by fair means and get sufficient time for the practice of Dhyānayoga. By regulating his actions in this way he is able to maintain his body, senses and mind in sound health and good working order and

can easily accomplish Dhyānayoga.

Sleeping for six hours in the middle of the night, and keeping awake during the first and last quarters as well as during the day-time, are generally considered as regulated sleep and wakefulness. Though this is the general rule, it is not indispensable that all should devote the second and third quarters of the night exclusively to sleep. The Sādhaka of Dhyānayoga should regulate his hours of sleep and wakefulness according to his nature and the requirements of his body. If he can manage with four or five hours of sleep without any adverse effect on his health and without feeling sleepy or languid during his meditation, he should devote only that much time to sleep instead of six hours.

* * *

The word 'Yukta' should be taken to mean that diet, recreation, activity, sleep and wakefulness of the Sādhaka should not offend against the injunctions of the scriptures, and should be kept within bounds considering the temperament, health and taste of the Sādhaka.

* * *

Success in Dhyānayoga leads to the realization of God, the boundless ocean of supreme Bliss and supreme Peace, which wipes out all one's sorrows and sufferings with their very root once for all. Having reached this state the Sādhaka has no more to go through the ordeal of birth and death, nor does he ever fall a victim to worry, grief, fear and anxiety etc. He remains, wholly and for all time, merged in the unruffled ocean of Bliss. The adjective 'Duḥkhahā' (which rids one of woe) has been used with the word 'Yogaḥ' in order to bring out this idea.

Having laid down rules regarding diet and recreation etc., suitable for the practice of Dhyānayoga, the Lord now proceeds to describe the marks which appear in a Sādhaka meditating on the absolute formless Divinity during the final stage in his Sādhanā:—

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते।
निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा॥ १८॥

विनियतम् thoroughly disciplined; चित्तम् the mind; यदा when; आत्मनि on God; एव exclusively; अवतिष्ठते gets focussed; तदा then; सर्वकामेभ्यः for all enjoyments; निःस्पृहः free from yearning; युक्तः established in Yoga; इति as; उच्यते is spoken of.

When the mind which is thoroughly disciplined gets riveted on God alone, then the person who is free from yearning for all enjoyments is said to be established in Yoga. (18)

The use of the adjective 'Viniyatam', with 'mind' is intended to show that it is only a thoroughly disciplined mind which can be irrevocably fixed on God. When the mind being completely free from carelessness, lethargy and distraction, gets fully and unshakably established in God alone i.e., loses consciousness of all other objects but God, it is said to be focussed on God.

When a man gets exclusively established in God, the ocean of supreme Peace and supreme Bliss, and overcomes all attraction for the transient, momentary and perishable enjoyments of this world and the next, he no more requires or craves for any worldly object. This is what is meant by one's being free from yearning for all enjoyments.

The Word 'Yuktaḥ' in this verse indicates the state of perfection in

Dhyānayoga. The intention is to show that when through the continued practice of Dhyānayoga the two marks stated above become fully manifest in the Yogī, he should be understood to have attained the final stage in the practice of Dhyānayoga.

One may feel tempted here to ask: What is the state of the thoroughly disciplined mind when it is thus focussed on God during meditation ? The question is answered in the following verse:—

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता।
योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः॥ १९॥

यथा as; निवातस्थः kept in a windless place; दीपः a light; न not; इङ्गते flickers; सा such; उपमा picture; आत्मनः on God; योगम् meditation; युञ्जतः of him who is practising; योगिनः of the Yogī; यतचित्तस्य of the disciplined mind; स्मृता is stated (to be).

As a light does not flicker in a windless place, such is stated to be the picture of the disciplined mind of the Yogī practising meditation on God. (19)

The word 'Dīpa' stands here for the flame of a burning candle or lamp. A steady light serves as a fitting illustration for the state of a steady mind. No other simile could depict it so well. A mountain peak, for instance, is devoid of light and is naturally steady; hence it has no point of affinity with the mind. The flame of a burning light is, however, both bright and unsteady like the mind; therefore it is akin to the mind. Just as a flame does not flicker when it is sheltered from wind, even so a disciplined mind, protected as it is from all sides during meditation, ceases its restless movements and remains uniformly luminous like the steady flame of a burning lamp. That is why the mind has been compared to a candle flame rather than to an immovable mountain devoid of light.

It is only the disciplined mind of the Yogī, which can remain immovably fixed in meditation on God, and no other. This is what is brought out by the use of the adjective 'Yata' before 'Cittasya'.

Describing thus the marks of the Sādhaka who has attained the final stage in Dhyānayoga, as also of his disciplined mind, the Lord now proceeds to describe in the next three verses the state of one who has realized God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, through the practice of Dhyānayoga.

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया।
यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति॥ २०॥

योगसेवया through the practice of Yoga; निरुद्धम् curbed; चित्तम् the mind; यत्र in which state; उपरमते becomes still; च and; यत्र in which; आत्मना through subtle reason (purified by meditation on God); आत्मानम् God; पश्यन् realizing; आत्मनि in God (the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss); एव only; तुष्यति rejoices.

The state in which, curbed through the practice of Yoga, the mind becomes still, and in which, realizing God through subtle reason (purified by meditation on God) the soul rejoices only in God. (20)

The word 'Yogasevā' means practice of Dhyānayoga. When through the continued practice of Dhyānayoga the mind gets firmly established in God alone, it is said to have become 'Niruddha', that is, curbed or brought under control.

The mind of the Yogī no sooner gets fully established in God than it naturally withdraws itself completely from the world. In that state, the world no longer finds any place in his mind. Though externally it may appear that his mind withdraws from the world only during Samādhi or absorption and thinks of the world at other times, really speaking, it maintains no relation with the world at all and at any time. Such a mind is said to have become still.

The word 'Yatra' in this verse denotes the state which has been referred to in verse 23 below as 'Yoga', and in which the Sādhaka of Dhyānayoga realizes God and gets detached from the world once for all. The indeclinable 'Eva' has been used to show that besides the joy of God-realization he knows no other joy which the world can give him. The intention is to show that having realized God, the ocean of supreme Bliss and supreme Peace, the Yogī remains constantly and ever merged in that Bliss and does not stand in the least need of any form of worldly joy.

Meditation, which leads to God-realization, should be practised as follows. Taking one's seat in a secluded spot, as described in verses 11 to 13 above, and renouncing all other thoughts, the mind should be fixed on God alone, through the following idea, the Absolute Reality, the one embodiment of Consciousness and Bliss, exists. There is no reality apart from Him. He alone is projected everywhere. He alone is consicous of His own existence; for He alone is the embodiment of Consciousness. He is eternal, changeless, unlimited, boundless, infinite, without parts and stainless. The mind, the intellect, the ego, the seer, the act of seeing and the object of sight, and everything else are in reality nothing but superimpositions on Brahma, and are, in fact, Brahma Himself. He is Bliss itself and is unspeakable. That embodiment of Bliss is itself blissful. That Bliss is whole, eternal, everlasting, unborn, imperishable, supreme, final, existence itself, consciousness itself, wisdom itself, unchangeable, immovable, constant, free from disease, knowledge itself, infinite and tranquil. Meditating thus on that embodiment of Bliss, the thought should revolve round the idea that nothing exists besides Him. If any other thought arises in the mind, it should be regarded as having proceeded from that very embodiment of Bliss, and as nothing but Bliss, and should be thus merged in Bliss. By constantly revolving this idea in the mind when all other thoughts are merged in the all-blissful and all-conscious God, and no other thought except the one blissful God remains, the Sādhaka is unshakably established in the all-blissful God. When through the regular and daily practice of the above form of meditation the world becomes one with Brahma in his consciousness, or in other words, when everything is changed into Brahma, the very embodiment of supreme Bliss and supreme Peace, realization of Brahma becomes easy to him.

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम्।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः॥ २१॥

अतीन्द्रियम् supersensuous, beyond the grasp of the senses; **बुद्धिग्राह्यम्** which can be

apprehended only through the (subtle and purified) intellect; यत् which; आत्यन्तिकम् eternal; सुखम् joy (there is); तत् that; यत्र in which state; वेत्ति (the soul) experiences; च and; स्थितः (wherein) established; अयम् this (Yogī); तत्त्वतः from the reality (of God); न not; चलति moves; एव verily.

Nay, in which the soul experiences the eternal and supersensuous joy which can be apprehended only through the subtle and purified intellect, and wherein established the said Yogī moves not from Truth on any account. (21)

The joy referred to in this verse has been qualified by three adjectives, viz., 'eternal', 'supersensuous' and 'apprehended only through the subtle and purified intellect', in order to distinguish the joy which is the very essence of God from the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika types of joy described in verses 36 to 39 of Chapter XVIII. The joy of the world is momentary, perishable, the root of suffering and alloyed with suffering; the joy which is the essence of God is not of this nature. It is superior even to the Sāttvika form of joy, and altogether different from it; it is eternal and ever unchangeable, because it is the same as God and there is no reality other than that. The adjective 'Ātyantikam' has been used to bring out this idea. The Rājasika form of joy, derived from sense-objects, is enjoyed through the senses; the joy referred to in the verse cannot be so enjoyed. It is synonymous with the supreme Eternal or God, who transcends the senses. This is brought out by the adjective 'Atīndriyam' (supersensuous). Again, the joy referred to in this verse in by itself of the nature of eternal consciousness. Because it wholly transcends Māyā, it is beyond the reach of the intellect; nevertheless even as the sky is reflected in an unsoiled and clean mirror, the joy referred to here is reflected in the intellect that has been steadied, sharpened and refined by the practice of adoration, meditation, discrimination and dispassion etc. That is why it has been spoken of as 'Buddhigrāhyam'.

The Sāttvika form of joy derived from meditation on God is also quite different from the other forms of worldly joy inasmuch as it leads to the supersensuous and eternal joy which is apprehended through the sharp and refined intellect. But it is enjoyed only at the time of meditation, and is not always of the same degree; and it represents only a state of the mind. Hence it cannot be called imperishable or everlasting. The joy referred to here, which is the same as God, is the fruit of the joy derived from meditation. Therefore, it is quite different from the Sāttvika form of joy. In this way the use of the three adjectives referred to above is intended to make it clear that the joy referred to here is not something that can be experienced like the Sāttvika joy mentioned in Chapter XVIII. On the other hand, it is the same as God, who is automatically revealed when the meditator, the object of meditation and the act of meditation become one.

The word 'Tattva' or Truth signifies God, who is the only Truth or Reality. The God-realized Yogī is ever established in God and is never and on no account disunited from Him. This is what is meant by the statement that he "moves not from Truth".

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः।
यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते॥ २२॥

यम् which; लाभम् gain (in the form of God-realization); लब्ध्वा attaining; ततः than that; अधिकम् greater; अपरम् any other (gain); न not; मन्यते reckons; च and; यस्मिन् in which; स्थितः established; गुरुणा दुःखेन by heavy sorrow; अपि even; न विचाल्यते is not shaken.

And having obtained which he does not reckon any other gain as greater than that, and established in which he is not shaken even by the heaviest of sorrows. (22)

The word 'Yam' refers to the state of God-realization, spoken of in the next verse as Yoga, and characterized as free from the contact of sorrow. Having realized God, the repository of supreme Bliss and supreme Peace, the Yogī has all his desires fulfilled in this state. To him all the enjoyments of this world as well as of the next, dominion over and riches of the three worlds, honour and fame extending over the entire universe, and all other means of worldly happiness appear as transient, momentary, insipid, worthless, trivial and insignificant. Hence he does not regard any object of this world as worthy of attainment, much less reckon any such gain as greater than what he has already achieved and realized.

Just as the greatest enjoyments of the world and the greatest worldly glory appear tasteless and insignificant to a God-realized soul, who never craves for them and remains absolutely unconcerned on his failure to obtain them or on their loss and is not in the least shaken from his state of equilibrium, even so he remains unshaken in the face of the greatest trials and tribulations. Ordinary trials and tribulations do not count much inasmuch as they can be borne even by men of fortitude and forbearance. The Yogī, however, who has realized God remains firm and unshaken as a rock even when he is faced with the most terrible and unbearable ordeals. Incision with a sharp edged weapon, bodily pain occasioned by exposure to most unbearable heat, cold, shower and lightning, excruciating pain caused by physical ailment the saddest bereavement, greatest ingominy, insult and reproach, and all other causes of acute suffering fail to disturb his equanimity even if they all combine. The reason is not far to seek. The Yogī who has realized God, ceases, really speaking to have any connection with his body; he appears to own it only in the eyes of the world. Due to his Prārabdha or destiny his body, senses and mind come in contact with and get disjoined from objects of the world; for instance they may be brought face to face with or dissociated from cold and heat; honour and ignominy, praise and censure and other favourable and unfavourable circumstances. But there being no enjoyer of pleasure and pain, his mind can never be subject to unhealthy modifications of any sort under any circumstances, and for any reason whatsoever. He remains ever irrevocably established in God.

The next verse specifies the state which has been extolled and outlined in verses 20,21 and 22 above, and encourages the Sādhaka to attain it:—

तं विद्याद् दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसञ्ज्ञितम्।
स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा॥ २३॥

दुःखसंयोगवियोगम् which is free from the contact of sorrow (in the form of transmigration); योगसञ्ज्ञितम् (and is) called Yoga; तम् that (state); विद्यात् (the Sādhaka) should know; सः that; योगः Yoga; अनिर्विण्णचेतसा with an unwearied mind; निश्चयेन resolutely; योक्तव्यः should be practised.

That state, called Yoga, which is free from the contact of sorrow (in the form of transmigration), should be known. Nay, this Yoga should be resolutely practised with an unwearied mind. (23)

Ceasing for good to have any connection with the world, which is only another name of sorrow, is what is meant by attaining freedom from contact with sorrow. It is not that the Yogī's body, senses and mind altogether suspend their functions of movement, hearing, seeing and reflecting or ascertaining etc., in this state. His body, senses, mind and intellect continue to perform all their functions according to his Prārabdha or destiny. But inasmuch as nothing remains in his consciousness except God, he ceases in reality to have any connection with those functions. This is true of him both during meditation and at other times.

The root of sorrow in the form of repeated birth and death lies in the contact between the subject and the object, or in other words, in the liaison due to ignorance between the soul and the objective world, the beginning of which cannot be traced. With the termination of this contact, sorrows and sufferings also come to an end for all time. In order to bring out this idea the word 'Saṁyoga' (contact) has been inserted between 'Duḥkha' and 'Viyoga', although the word 'Duḥkhaviyogam' would have sufficed to convey the idea of cessation of sorrow in this state.

The *Yoga-sūtras* of Patañjali also say:—

"The great sorrow in the form of future births and deaths is called 'Heya' (that which ought to be avoided)."* (II.16)

"The cause of 'Heya' or suffering is the contact between the subject and the object."† (II.17.)

"Ignorance is the root of that contact."‡ (II.24.)

"The termination of that contact between the subject and the object through the eradication of Ignorance is known as 'Hāna' (shutting out the 'Heya'); this represents the aloofness (Kaivalya) of the subject."§ (II.25.)

The state of God-realization, which has been extolled and outlined in the preceding three verses, is termed 'Yoga'. This is indicated by the adjective 'Yogasaṁjñitam' going with the word 'Tam' in the verse.

The word 'Vidyāt' shows that one should approach a God-realized soul and study the scriptures and thereby ascertain the character and glory of the state described in verses 20 to 23 and the method of practising it.

The word 'Nirviṇṇa' means one who is possessed by ennui or the feelings of boredom. Failing to observe any tangible results following from the Sādhanā, the Sādhaka after a few days of practice begins to lose heart and finds the strain too much for him. He sees no end to his efforts and begins to doubc whether they will ever be crowned with success. A mind which is free from this feeling of boredom, and is full of perseverance and zeal, is called 'Anirviṇṇa'. The use of the word 'Anirviṇṇacetasā' is, therefore, intended to urge on the Sādhaka to drive out this feeling of boredom entirely from his mind. He should always be on his guard against such feelings as may turn his mind from his Sādhanā or slacken his perseverance and

* हेयं दुःखमनागतम्।

† द्रष्टृदृश्ययोः संयोगो हेयहेतुः।

‡ तस्य हेतुरविद्या।

§ तदभावात्संयोगाभावो ज्ञानं तद्दृशेः कैवल्यम्।

zeal, and should take to the practice of Yoga with an earnest mind.

The word 'Niścaya' signifies faith and reverence. The use of the word 'Niśchayena' is, therefore, intended to emphasize that the Sādhaka of Yoga should possess full faith in and reverence for his practice, for the scriptures dealing with the same, for the teachers of Yoga and also for the fruit of such practice, and should devote himself to it with firm determination and application and regard it as the primary duty of life, and success in his Sādhanā in the shape of God-realization to be the goal of his life.

Naming the state of God-realization as 'Yoga', it has been declared man's definite duty to attain it. The next two verses delineate the process of meditation on God as one with the Sādhaka with the object of attaining this state:—

सङ्कल्पप्रभवान्कामांस्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।
मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥ २४ ॥

सङ्कल्पप्रभवान् arising from thoughts of the world; सर्वान् all; कामान् desires; अशेषतः completely; त्यक्त्वा renouncing; मनसा by the mind; इन्द्रियग्रामम् the whole pack of the senses; समन्ततः from all sides; एव verily; विनियम्य fully restraining.

Completely renouncing all desires arising from thoughts of the world, and fully restraining the whole pack of the senses from all sides by the mind. (24)

Verse 62 of Chapter II spoke of desire as springing up from attachment, whereas in this verse it is stated to have its origin in thoughts of the world. There is, however, no contradiction between the two statements, inasmuch the verse referred to above speaks of attachment as having its origin in thoughts of sense-objects and giving rise in its turn to desire. This makes it clear that thoughts of the world are the ultimate cause of desire.

The words 'Sarvān Kāmān' denote all desires for the enjoyments of this world as well as the next in their intense as well as moderate and mild forms. Thus all the gradations and phases of desire such as the latent desire for survival, craving, wish, thirst and hope etc., are comprised in them; and since thoughts of the world are spoken of as their root, 'attachment' too should be naturally taken as included therein.

Absence of even the least trace of the latent desire for survival, attachment, craving, wish, longing, hope or thirst for any object of enjoyment is what is sought to be conveyed by 'complete renunciation of all desires'. A pot containing clarified butter may be emptied of all its contents, and yet its inner surface will continue to be greasy. A box containing camphor, saffron or musk, even when denuded of its contents, will retain the smell of what it contained. Similarly, desires too, even when driven out of the mind, leave their traces behind. 'Complete renunciation of all desires' involves the erasure or abrasion of these traces as well.

It is the nature of the senses to run after worldly objects. They are, however, enabled to apprehend an object only when they succeed in carrying the mind with them. If the mind is weak, they easily succeed in dragging it after them. But when the mind is made one-pointed with the help of a purified and resolute intellect, the senses get crippled as it were and are unable to move among the objects of enjoyment without the aid of the mind. That is why

taking his seat for the practice of Dhyānayoga according to the instruction contained in verses 11 to 13 above, the Yogī should with the help of discrimination and dispassion completely withdraw all his senses through the mind from all external objects, and allowing none of them to run after any object turn them wholly inwards, controlling their power to run after objects of enjoyment. This is what is meant by 'fully restraining the pack of all the senses from all sides by the mind".

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत्॥ २५॥

शनैः शनैः through gradual practice; उपरमेत् he should attain tranquillity; धृतिगृहीतया बुद्ध्या through reason controlled by steadfastness; मनः the mind; आत्मसंस्थम् कृत्वा fixing on God; किञ्चित् anything (other than God); अपि whatsoever; न चिन्तयेत् should not think of.

He should through gradual practice attain tranquillity; and fixing the mind on God through reason controlled by steadfastness, he should not think of anything else. (25)

In the preceding verse the Sādhaka was advised to withdraw the senses completely from external objects with the help of the mind. But so long as the mind continues to indulge in thoughts of the world, it can neither fully concentrate itself on God, nor can withdraw the senses completely from their objects. It has been the habit of the mind from time without beginning to indulge in thoughts of the world; it has to be weaned from that lifelong habit and fixed on God. It is the nature of the mind to assume the form of the very object on which it has been habitually dwelling, and to cling to it. The only way to wean it from its old habit is to form a new habit stronger than and opposed to the former, and compel it to adopt the new habit by cajoling, threatening and restraining it by an unwearied, resolute and steadfast will. Impatience and overhaste will not avail. If the will remains steadfast and the practice is continued, the mind will be completely weaned before long from its old habit and will adopt the new one. It will get as strongly attached to the new pursuit as it was to the old. When a young child catches hold of a sharp knife or a pair of scissors, the mother slowly and gently wrests it from the hands of the child through persuasion or even by threat, if necessary. Even so the mind should be completely freed of all thoughts of the world, bringing home to it through the intellect possessed of discrimination and dispassion the transient and momentary character of all worldly enjoyments, and presenting to it the horrible picture of the bondage and the tortures of hell etc., which are sure to follow if it gets entangled in those enjoyments. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by asking us to attain tranquillity through gradual practice.

So long as the mind does not wholly give up thoughts of the objects of enjoyment the Sādhaka should daily sit for meditation, and restraining the senses from external objects in the first instance should thereafter gradually try with the help of the intellect to empty the mind of all worldly thoughts and at the same time attempt to fix it on God through steadfast reason. An intellect which is naturally tainted with attachment, doubt and error due to lack of insight into the truth and secret of God can never attain fixity and steadfastness. Nor can such an

intellect exercise its steadying influence on the mind and enable it to concentrate itself on God. But on obtaining an insight into the truth and secret of God through association with wise men when the intellect becomes one pointed, it ceases to indulge in the objects of this phenomenal world and takes delight in God alone. In the conception of such an intellect nothing exists apart from God. In that state it succeeds in completely withdrawing the mind from the objects of the world, and engaging it in the thoughts of God, gradually leading the mind to identify itself with God. This is what is meant by fixing the mind on God through reason controlled by steadfastness.

So long as the mind does not get absorbed in and identified with God, or in other words, so long as one is not able to realize God, one cannot be sure of its remaining constantly fixed on the object of meditation viz., God. That is why practice in the most intensive form is necessary to keep it always fixed on God. Therefore, when the Lord says that the Sādhaka should not think of any thing else but God, His intention seems to be to emphasize that once the Sādhaka sitting for meditation is able through intensive practice to fix his mind on God, he should take care that it does not even for a moment withdraw itself from God and revert to worldly objects. This alertness on the part of the Sādhaka is very helpful in acquiring steadfastness in practice. Even as the practice grows in intensity as a result of daily meditation, the Sādhaka should be more careful not to allow the mind to wander elsewhere, but keep it more steadily fixed on God for a greater length of time.

The process of fixing the mind on God during meditation is as follows:—Adopting the procedure detailed in verses 1 to 14 above, and seated in a secluded spot for meditation, the Sādhaka should first of all free the mind of all thoughts of the world and attempt to fix it exclusively on God. Whatever object appears before his mind at that time, should be discarded at once as a figment. Eliminating in this way every thought that arises in the mind, the existence of the body, senses, mind and intellect too should be repudiated. By negating everything in this way when the entire objective world disappears from the mind, the faculty of negation alone will remain. Even though this faculty is useful and harmless, this too has got to be eliminated by strength of will. Or, subsequent to the negation of the entire objective world, it will automatically cease. Whatever will then remain is the incomprehensible Truth. This Truth is Absolute and unconditioned and complete by itself. It is unspeakable and unthinkable. Therefore, negating in this way the objective world as well as the body, senses, mind, intellect and the ego, and finally the negating faculty itself the Sādhaka should attempt to establish himself in the Truth which lies beyond the range of thought.

The Sādhaka has been asked to fix the mind on God, and to think of nothing else than God. But if due to the force of old habit the mind gets out of control and begins to run after worldly objects, what should the Sādhaka do? Anticipating this query, the Lord says:—

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम्।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत्॥ २६॥

अस्थिरम् restless; **चञ्चलम्** fidgety; **मनः** the mind; **यतः यतः** in pursuit of whatever (object

of sense, such as sound and so on); निश्चरति wanders; ततः ततः from every such object; एतत् it (the mind); नियम्य restraining or pulling back; आत्मनि एव on God alone; वशम् नयेत् should fix.

Drawing back the restless and fidgety mind from all those objects after which it runs, he should repeatedly fix it on God. (26)

The mind is extremely restless and fidgety; it will not easily stick to a particular object for any length of time. As for a new habit, the mind will refuse to submit to it every time you try to inculcate it upon the mind. The Sādhaka fixes the mind on God with great effort, and complacently imagines that he has succeeded in his effort; but lo; the very next moment he finds that it has given him the slip, and has run far, far away. That is why in the preceding verse it has been urged that the Sādhaka should remain alert, and should not allow the mind to think of anything else than God. But in spite of all his alertness, the mind will elude his grasp in an unguarded moment and will be so quick in running away that for some time the Sādhaka will fail to notice when it slipped away and where it is gone. Ignorance and delusion is undoubtedly the real reason why the mind recoils from God, the boundless ocean of Bliss and Peace, and the embodiment of Truth and Knowledge, and runs after and indulges in the transient and ephemeral objects of the world, which are a source of suffering and sorrow; but though secondary when compared to that real cause, the main reason from the point of view of practice is its lifelong habit of indulging in worldly thoughts. Therefore, it is urged in this verse that the moment it comes to the notice of the Sādhaka in course of his meditation that his mind has run away in pursuit of other objects, he should drag it back at once with great caution and firmness and without the least hesitation, and concentrate it on God. He should repeat again and again this practice of drawing back the mind from the objects of the world and concentrating it on God. He should not mind in the least its prayers and entreaties, its blandishments and endearments, its allurements and threats. The least slackness on his part will encourage its waywardness. Under such circumstances, yielding to its importunities and allowing it to linger somewhere even for a while will be tantamount to giving out of infatuation unwholesome food to an ailing person, and placing a sharp knife in the hands of a baby, and thereby endangering their lives. Caution is the watchword of spiritual practice. If the Sādhaka gives way to laxity and feebleness at this juncture he will not succeed in Dhyānayoga. Therefore, he should observe the utmost care and repeatedly try to withdraw the mind from worldly objects and fix it on God.

* * *

The Lord is dwelling here on the identity of the soul with the Oversoul. In order to bring out this point, the word 'Ātmani' has been interpreted as 'God' in this as well in the preceding verse.

The next verse deals with the fruit of withdrawing the mind from all sides and concentrating it on God.

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम्।
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम्॥ २७॥

हि because; प्रशान्तमनसम् to him whose mind is perfectly serene; अकल्मषम् to him who is sinless; शान्तरजसम् to him whose passion is subdued; ब्रह्मभूतम् to him who is identified with Brahma (the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss); एनम् योगिनम् to this Yogī; उत्तमम् supreme; सुखम् happiness; उपैति comes (as a matter of course).

For to the Yogī whose mind is perfectly serene who is sinless, whose passion is subdued, and who is identified with Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, supreme happiness comes as a matter of course. (27)

As a result of ripe judgment and dispassion the mind ceases to indulge in thoughts of the world, and overcoming restlessness and distraction becomes absolutely steady and perfectly serene. Possessed of such a mind he who is firmly established in God is referred to here by the word 'Praśāntamanasam'.

The mode of Prakṛti known as 'Tamas' or darkness (which is the same as ignorance) and all its products, such as carelessness, sloth, excessive sleep, infatuation, and the various forms of vices and evil conduct, which are known as 'impurities' of the mind, and which drag one downwards in the scale of evolution—all these are covered by the word 'Kalmaṣa'. And he who is absolutely free from all these evils is denoted here by the word 'Akalmaṣam'. The word cannot be interpreted to mean one who has given up all sorts of sinful activities as well as virtuous acts done with an interested motive, as some have taken it to mean. Refraining from virtuous acts done with an interested motive is covered by the word 'Śāntarajasam'. Hence the word 'Akalmaṣam' should be taken to signify abstention from sinful acts alone.

Attachment, the feeling of want, desire, greed, thirst and action with an interested motive—all these have their root in Rajas (XIV.7,12), and it is these again which foster the element of Rajas. The word 'Śāntarajasam', therefore, stands for one who is free from all these. Distraction of mind in the shape of restlessness is also a product of Rajoguṇa, but the absence of this evil has already been covered by the word 'Praśāntamanasam'. That is why it has not been mentioned again in this connection.

By constantly revolving in his mind the idea that he is not the body, but he is Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, the Sādhaka gets firmly established in God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. One who has thus established himself in identity with Brahma is called 'Brahmabhūta'. The word stands here for a Sādhaka who has reached an advanced stage in the path of oneness with God. Such a Sādhaka has the elements of Rajas and Tamas subdued in him, but he has not yet risen wholly above all the three Guṇas. Judged from his own point of view, he is no doubt established in Brahma: but really speaking he has not yet attained Brahma. Of course, one who is thus firmly established in Brahma speedily attains Brahma through Knowledge of Truth. It is, therefore, that the next verse speaks of attainment of eternal Bliss, as the fruit of this state. This attainment of 'eternal Bliss' is the same as attainment of Brahma. It is in this very sense that the word 'Brahmabhūtaḥ' has been used in verse 24 of Chapter V as well, and there this state has been shown to bring in its wake, attainment of 'Brahma, the abode of Peace'. In verse 54 of Chapter XVIII too a 'Brahmabhūta' is said to attain 'Parā Bhakti' which is the same as Knowledge of Truth, and thereby to attain God (XVIII.55).

Therefore, the word 'Brahmabhūtam' here does not stand for the perfect soul, who has realized God.

Rooted in pure Sattva (the element of harmony) which lies beyond the modes of Tamas and Rajas, or the Principles of darkness and activity, when the Sādhaka is able to concentrate his mind on God, the embodiment of eternal Knowledge and Bliss, as identical with him, he derives a Sāttvika form of joy from such meditation. It is this joy which is referred to here by the words 'Uttamam Sukham', or supreme happiness. It is the same type of joy which has been spoken of as 'Sukham' or unmixed joy in the first half of verse 21 of Chapter V, and as 'Antaḥsukha', or joy within, in verse 24 of the same Chapter.

Describing thus the state of the Yogī who has identified himself with Brahma through the practice of meditation on God as one with himself, the Lord reveals the fruit of such identification in the next verse.

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः।
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते॥ २८॥

विगतकल्मषः योगी the sinless Yogī; एवम् thus, in this way; सदा constantly; आत्मानम् his self; युञ्जन् uniting (with God); सुखेन easily; ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शम् (in the shape of) attainment of God; अत्यन्तम् eternal, everlasting; सुखम् bliss; अश्नुते enjoys.

The sinless Yogī, thus uniting his self constantly with God, easily enjoys the eternal Bliss of oneness with Brahma. (28)

The word 'Yogī' here stands for a Sādhaka who mediates on God as one with himself and has reached an advanced stage in his Sādhanā.

Renouncing all thoughts of the world as laid down in verse 20 above when the Sādhaka is able to establish himself firmly in constant identity with God, or in other words, remains in the Brahma-Consciousness, he is said to have united his self with God.

Identification with the Unmanifest or formless Divinity is no doubt extremely difficult to attain for one who is identified with the body, as pointed out in verse 5 of Chapter XII. This has been made clear by the use of the word 'Dehavadbhiḥ' (those who are centred in the body) in that verse. In this verse, however, the Lord is speaking of the Sādhaka following the path of Knowledge, who no longer identifies himself with the body, and is established in Brahma, as the word 'Brahmabhūtam' used in the last verse shows. The Sādhaka whose consciousness is no longer centred in the body, and who has identified himself with Brahma, naturally finds it easy to attain the Bliss of oneness with Brahma. Thus there is no mutual contradiction between the two statements, referring as they do to Sādhakas living in different planes of consciousness.

* * *

Whatever joys are recognized in the world, even the highest of them does not fall in the category of true happiness. For there is none among them, which is superior to all other forms of happiness, and ever remains unchanged. That is why the Śruti says:—

"That which is infinite or great beyond all, is true happiness. There is no joy in that which is finite. Happiness lies in infinity. Efforts should be made in particular to know the Infinite alone".*

* यो वै भूमा तत्सुखं नाल्पे सुखमस्ति, भूमैव सुखं भूमा त्वेव विजिज्ञासितव्यः *(Chānd. Up., VII xxiii.1)*

The Śruti or Vedic lore brings out the distinction between the 'finite' and the 'Infinite' in the following words:—

"The 'Infinite' represents that plane of consciousness in which no other is seen, no other is heard, and no other is cognized, and the state in which another is seen, another is heard and another is cognized represents the 'finite'. That which is Infinite is immortal. That which is finite is mortal."*

That which exists today and will cease tomorrow can never be true happiness. Even if we regard it as partially coming under the definition of happiness, it is extremely paltry and insignificant. Comparing the various types of happiness, the sage Yājñavalkya says:— "He who owns a kingdom extending over the entire globe, and possesses the highest worldly glory and all the objects of worldly enjoyment, such as a wife, progeny, wealth, land, a sound health, honour and fame etc., is the happiest of men; for such is supreme happiness in the eyes of man. Hundred times greater than this is the joy of the world of Pitṛs or manes; hundred times greater than that is the joy of the abode of Gandharvas; hundred times greater than the last is the joy of those who are born as celestials to enjoy the fruit of their meritorious acts; hundred times greater than that is the joy of the eternal gods; hundred times greater than that is the joy of the abode of Prajāpatis or Lord of creation; hundred times greater is the joy of Brahmaloka (the abode of Brahmā, the creator). This is the joy attained by sinless and desireless Śrotriyas (those who have mastered the Vedas); for the Śrotriya who has no thirst for enjoyments is Brahmaloka incarnate." *(Bṛh., Up., IV. iii.33)* A God-realized soul, however, enjoys that infinite, eternal, incomprehensible Bliss which cannot be compared with any other joy, and which constitutes his very being. This is what is meant by enjoyment of the eternal Bliss of oneness with Brahma.

It is this infinite joy, which has been termed as 'Ātyantikam Sukham', or eternal and supersensuous joy in verse 21 and as 'Akṣayam Sukham' (joy which knows no diminution) in verse 21 of Chapter V.

Having thus shown the form of meditation practised by the Sāṅkhyayogī seeking identity with God, as well as its fruit, the Lord now proceeds to describe his mental attitude in life as actually lived in the world:—

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः॥ २९॥†

योगयुक्तात्मा he who is united in identity with the all-pervading, infinite Consciousness; **सर्वत्र समदर्शनः** (and) seeing unity everywhere); **आत्मानम्** the Self; **सर्वभूतस्थम्** present in all beings; **च** and; **सर्वभूतानि** all beings; **आत्मनि** (as assumed) in the Self; **ईक्षते** sees.

The Yogī who is united in identity with the all-pervading, infinite Consciousness; and sees unity everywhere, beholds the Self present in all beings, and all beings as assumed in the Self. (29)

---

* यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमाथ यत्रान्यत्पश्यत्यन्यच्छृणोत्यन्यद्विजानाति तदल्पं यो वै भूमा तदमृतमथ यदल्पं तन्मर्त्यम् *(Ibid.,* VII. *XXiV.*1)

† There is a parallel verse in the *Īśa Upaniṣad,* which runs as follows:—

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते॥

"But he who sees all beings in the Self, and the self in all beings, no longer hates anyone" *(Īśa Up.,*6)

The word 'Yogayuktātmā' stands for the Yogī, who is established in identity with the Absolute and formless Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, and is referred to as 'Brahmayogayuktātmā' (One who has completely identified himself through meditation with Brahma) in verse 21 of Chapter V and as 'Brahmabhūta' or identified with Brahma' in verse 24 of the same chapter; in verses 24 and 27 of this chapter and in verse 54 of Chapter XVIII.

Verse 18 of Chapter V and verse 32 of this chapter describe how the illumined soul sees unity everywhere. Even so the Yogī referred to in this verse, conducting himslef well and in the proper way as approved of by the scriptures with all beings of the world, constantly sees in all the same indivisible consciousness which constitutes his own being. This is what is meant by his seeing unity everywhere.

* * *

God is the only reality; the objective world appearing apart from Him has no existence. Realizing this truth, he who sees the one Self, permeating the whole creation, animate as well as inanimate, as its substratum, even as the dreamer sees his own self projected in the form of the entire dream-world, or in other words, he who realizes the fact that the Self alone is manifested in the form of the different beings, and that nothing exists apart from the Self, is said to 'see the Self present in all beings'. Similarly, just as he who has awakened from a dream of a reverie sees the world of his dream or reverie as nothing but a projection of his thought, and existing in his own self, even so the Sādhaka referred to above sees the entire creation, animate as well as inanimate, as nothing but a projection of the Self. This is what is meant by seeing "all beings as assumed in the Self". In order to bring out this distinction clearly the Lord speaks of the Self as actually present in all beings (Sarvabhūtastham) and uses no such word denoting actual existence while speaking of seeing all beings in the Self.

Having thus spoken of the Yogī following the path of Knowledge, and the final stage of his Sādhanā in the shape of seeing unity everywhere, the Lord now describes the final stage of Sādhanā of a follower of the path of Devotion, and how he sees God in every being:—

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति॥ ३०॥

यः who; सर्वत्र (present) in all beings; माम् me (the Universal Self or Vāsudeva as He is called); पश्यति sees; च and; सर्वम् the totality of beings; मयि (existing) in Me (the Universal Self or Vāsudeva); पश्यति sees; तस्य to him; अहम् I; न प्रणश्यामि am never out of sight; च and; सः he; मे to Me; न प्रणश्यति never goes out of sight.

He who sees Me (the Universal Self) present in all beings, and all beings existing within Me, never loses sight of Me, and I never lose sight of him. (30)

Just as ether exists in the cloud, and the cloud in ether, even so God is present in every being, and every being exists in God. He who realizes this fact is spoken of as seeing God present in all beings, and all beings existing in God. It may be asked here: In what sense does the Sādhaka see God present in all beings and all beings existing in God ? Does it mean that God inheres in all objects, as a cause inheres in

its effect; or that God pervades all beings and the latter stand pervaded by him; or again that God is the Support of all beings and the latter are supported by Him ? To my mind all these relations can be taken to subsist between God and His creation. For just as ether is a remote cause of a cloud, even so God is the ultimate cause of the whole of this animate and inanimate creation; it is He who pervades all even as ether pervades the cloud; and He again is the sole support of all, even as ether is the support of all, even as ether is the support of the cloud.

According to the Śruti text: 'आकाशाद् वायुर्वायोरग्निरग्नेरापः' (*Taitta. Up.*, II.1), air is evolved from ether, fire from air, and from fire is evolved water, which is the same as a cloud. Ether is the first of the five elements and is the cause of the other four. Prakṛti or Primordial Matter is the ultimate cause of ether; and it is Prakṛti which brings forth the entire creation under the supervision of God. This Prakṛti is nothing but a potency of God, and is therefore identical with God. Looked at from this point of view the whole of this animate and inanimate creation is evolved from God. Therefore, it is but reasonable to say that He is the final cause of the entire creation. The Lord Himself says in the Gītā (X.8):—

"I am the source of all creation; everything in the world moves because of Me."*

Likewise, just as ether permeates every particle of water in the cloud through and through, even so God permeates every particle of matter in the whole of this animate and inanimate creation. "All this is permeated by Me in My unmanifest aspect (as ice by water)" (*Gītā* IX.4).†

Again, just as ether is the support, not only of the cloud, but of all the other four elements, viz., air, fire, water and earth, none of which can exist without ether, even so God is the sole and supreme Support of the entire universe consisting of animate and inanimate creation (X.42).

* * *

Just as when a clever actor appears in different garbs, one who is acquainted with the actor and his voice etc., recognizes him in all such garbs, even so all the different forms of beings in this world are nothing but so many garbs of God. We do not recognize them as such; that is why we hold them as separate from God, and entertain fear and hesitation with regard to them and recoil from serving them. But he who recognizes His presence in all beings may certainly observe outward distinction in his dealings with different beings on account of the differences of garb; yet in his heart of hearts he will adore them all. If our father, or any other dear relation appears before us in a different guise, and we succeed in recognizing him, shall we spare any services and attentions to him ? That is why Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa says:—"Knowing the whole creation to be a manifestation of Śrī Sītā and Śrī Rāma, I offer my salutation to all joining the two palms."‡

Just as Śrī Baladeva, the elder brother of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, beheld Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the calves as well as in the cowherd boys and all that they had with them,§ or just as the

* अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते।

† मया ततमिदं सर्वंजगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना।

‡ सीय राममय सब जग जानी। करउँ प्रनाम जोरि जुग पानी।।

§ The incident occurred in the land of Vraja (the beautiful tract of land lying in the vicinty of Mathura). On the sandy bank of the Yamunā, surrounded by His playmates, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was one day having His midday repast and engaged in His boyish sports. With the flute stuck into the cloth tied round His waist, He held the horn and the cane in His left arm-pit and pickles of lemon etc., in

cowherd-maids of Vraja saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa everywhere* and at every time with their love-intoxicated eyes, even so the devotee should find his chosen Deity manifest everywhere as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Viṣṇu, Śrī Śaṅkara, the Divine Mother or any other embodied form. That is how we can see God as present in an embodied form in the whole world.

Likewise, just as Arjuna saw the entire universe in Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Universal Form†, and mother Yaśodā saw it in the cavity of baby Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mouth§ and Kākabhuśuṇḍi, the crow-saint, saw it within

---

the interstices of His fingers; and with rice and butter in His right palm, He stood in the midst of His companions and jested with them, laughing loudly Himself and making His friends rock with laughter. The cowherd boys were all absorbed in dining with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the meanwhile, the calves had proceeded afar in search of pasture. Holding the morsel of rice in His hand as described above, the Lord took leave of His friends and ran in search of the calves. The sight of this sport of the Lord deluded Brahmā, the Creator, who stole away both the calves and the cowherd boys. Coming to know who had done this, and in order to delight the mothers of the boys and the mother cows and frustrate the prank of Brahmā, the Lord Himself assumed the forms of the calves and boys. He appeared as a true copy of each calf and boy he replaced, in forms as well as in the constitution of his limbs, in the shape and size of the articles the boy possessed, viz., his staff, horn, flute, sling, clothes and ornaments, and also his nature, qualities, size, age, name and habits, and thus gave an ocular demonstration of the truth that the whole creation is full of God. Śrī Baladeva at first could not make out anything. Later on, he observed that the affection of the mothers for their boys and of the mother cows for calves which had been long weaned, had grown by leaps and bounds. This aroused his suspicion. Observing with a discerning eye, therefore, he saw that all the calves and their care-takers, the cowherd boys, and all that they possessed were no other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa and was filled with wonder.

Later on, Brahmā so saw the boys and calves etc., as the same as Śrī Kṛṣṇa; thereupon he extolled the Lord and craved for His forgiveness (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* X.xiii).

* A cowherd-maid who has her eyes coloured by love says:—

In whichever direction I look, I find
The landscape full of Śyāma (dark blue).
The bowers and groves are dark.
The water of the Yamunā is dark,
The sky and clouds are dark.
All colours are merged in the dark hue.
People say this is something novel.
Am I mad, or the dark pupil of
The peoples' eyes is changed?
The heart of the moon and the scion
Of the Sun are dark, the musk is dark,
As well as Cupid, the conqueror of the world
The neck of the blue-necked Śiva is also dark,
As if the dark colour has been broadcast all over the earth,
The letters of the Vedas appear dark, the point of
The tapering light is also dark.
Not to speak of men and gods, the Formless Brahma
Itself has assumed a dark Form.

† *Vide* Gītā, Chapter XI.

§ As an infant, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa had been giving incomparable joy to the hearts of mother Yaśodā and the men and women of Vraja by His childish plays of a marvellous nature. One day He ate up a quantity of earth. Thereupon, snubbing Him, the mother said, "O wilful child! Why should you have stealthily eaten earth?" The Lord opened His mouth and said, "Mother, if you do not believe Me, examine My mouth." Looking into the mouth, Yaśodā was taken aback in wonder. She observed in the small mouth of the baby the entire creation, including the animate and inanimate worlds, the

the belly* of Bhagavān Śrī Rāmacandra, even so the devotee should see it as part and parcel of the Deity he worships. This is another way of seeing the world as existing in God with attributes.

A vision of the embodied form of God, the boundless ocean of beauty, love, glory and magnanimity, and the embodiment of sweetness and bliss, is difficult to attain even for gods. And once the devotee beholds this transcendent form, which is an embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, the bond of union between him and his Lord becomes indissoluble and permanent. This is what is meant by the statement that the Lord never loses sight of him and he never loses sight of the Lord.

One who seeks a vision of God with

---

sky, the ten directions (including the four cardinal points, the four intermediate corners, and the upper and lower directions), mountains, islands, oceans, the earth, air, fire, the moon, stars, the deities presiding over the senses, the senses and mind, objects of senses like sound etc., the three Guṇas of Māyā or Prakṛti, the Jīvas and their various forms, and the whole of Vraja. She wondered whether she was awake or dreaming. Finally, she was seized with fear and bowing to Him surrendered herself to the Lord. Thereupon Śrī Kṛṣṇa exercised His charm on her, and motherly affection being roused in her breast, she took up the child in her arms and began to caress Him (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* X. viii).

* The great devotee, Kākabhuśuṇḍi, was enjoying the sight of the childish sports of Bhagavān Śrī Rāmacandra. One day, moving on all fours, Śrī Rāma gave a chase to Kākabhuśuṇḍi. The latter took wing, and the Lord extended His arm to capture the flying bird, Kākabhuśuṇḍi went on flying till he reached Brahmaloka, the abode of Brahmā; but there too he found Śrī Rāma's arm pursuing him. A distance of about an inch only separated him from the hand of Śrī Rāma. He exerted his utmost to elude His grasp, but the arm of Śrī Rāma was equally obstinate in pursuing him. Losing his nerve, the crow Bhuśuṇḍi now closed his eyes. When he opened them again, he found himself in Ayodhyā (the home of Śrī Rāma) from where he had flown, Śrī Rāma laughed at this, whereupon the crow was involuntarily drawn into His wide open mouth. A graphic account of his subsequent experiences is supplied by him to Garuḍa, the king of birds, in Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa's Rāmacaritamānasa which is reproduced below:—

"In His abdomen did I see, O Lord of birds, a multitude of universes. There were innumerable spheres, most wonderful to look at, each surpassing another in the skill of its execution. There did I find millions of Brahmās and Śivas, countless suns, moons and stars, innumerable deities presiding over different regions and gods of death and punishment, numberless mountains and vast stretches of land, oceans, rivers, lakes, endless tracts of forests and an extensive creation comprising a vast range of different species, such as gods, Ṛṣis, Siddhas, Nāgas, human beings, Kinnaras, the four orders of creation, consisting of both moving and immobile creatures. *viz.*, mammals hatched creatures, such as birds and reptiles etc., creatures born of perspiration (such as lice) and plant life. I saw there things unseen and unheard of, and beyond the range even of the mind; how, then, can those wonders be described in words. I visited a number of universes, spending a hundred years in each of them.

"Every universe had its own creator (Brahmā), Protector (Viṣṇu), Destroyer (Śiva), Manus (progenitors of mankind) and guardians of the different directions (Dikpālas). Every universe had a different types of humanity, demigods (Gandharvas), astral beings (Bhūtas), ghosts (Vetālas), Kinnaras (another species of demigods having the head of a horse), night haunters (Niśācaras), quadrupeds, birds, serpents, gods, demons, and all other creatures, each having a number of varieties or subdivisions. Even the lands, rivers, oceans, lakes, mountains and all other phenomena were different.

"In each universe did I see myself and many wonderful things. Every universe, O respected one, had its own Ayodhyā, with the river Sarayū, having different men and women including Daśaratha, Kauśalyā, Bharata, and other brothers, each having a different form in each universe. Śrī Rāma had taken His descent in each and I witnessed His childish sports in every one of them. Everything I saw was different in each universe, and most wonderful too, O mount of Śrī Hari! But Śrī Rāma was the same everywhere, though I passed through countless universes. Driven by the wind of infatuation, I wandered through universe after universe; but everywhere I saw the same Śrī Rāma, having the same loveliness of form and indulging in the same pranks of childhood.

attributes and Form must have faith in an embodied divine Form. The worshipper of such a Form must have the firm conviction that the Deity he worships is the highest manifestation of Divinity, and is all-powerful, and that He represents both the Absolute and the Qualified aspects of God. (If the Sādhaka regards any other aspects or form of God as higher than the object of his worship, he cannot attain the highest goal through the worship of that Deity.) He should then get an image or picture of the Deity of his choice, and taking it to be a visible and living embodiment of the Deity should offer it worship, praises and prayer. And meditating on this form he should gradually develop his love and devotion for it. At the time of worship he should firmly believe that the image of the Lord is not something material but a living God, who eats, drinks, walks, smiles and speaks. If the Sādhaka is able to develop genuine faith, the Lord will manifest Himself through that very image as a living Incarnation and fulfil the devotee's life and turn it into an embodiment of Bliss by giving an ocular demonstration of His love and affection to the devotee.* Thereafter, through the grace of God, He may obtain even a direct vision of the Deity. There is no definite time-limit for the attainment of this vision. The period may be short or long according to the earnestness of the Sādhaka and the degree of his dependence on Divine Grace. Once he succeeds in obtaining a direct vision of God, it becomes easy for him, through the grace of God, to see Him anywhere and at any time—whenever and wherever he likes. In what plane of thought the man who has seen God face to face, lives, is known only to him who has actually gone through this transcendent experience; others can say nothing about it.

Over and above the worship of the image or picture of the Deity of his choice, another practice for securing a vision of God in Form anywhere and everywhere is to practise meditation on that Form, daily and regularly, in a secluded spot, and engrave deeply on the tablet of one's mind and image of that Form. When the mind is able to form an image, the Sādhaka should retire to some secluded corner and with open eyes create a mental image of that Form in the void and try to scan it. Depending on the grace of God if one repeats the practice again and again with faith, reverence and determination, he will succeed before long in beholding in the void a vivid mental picture of the Deity, perfect in all details, as if smiling and speaking to him. This can be achieved by continued and resolute practice. When the Sādhaka is thus able to cast his thoughts into the mould of the form of his Deity, a vivid picture of the Deity will appear before his eyes wherever he likes, the

"It appeared as if I spent one hundred Kalpas (1 Kalpa = 4,32,00,00,000) years in my journey through the numerous universes. At the end of my wanderings I came to my hermitage and spent some time there. There I heard the news of my Lord's advent in Ayodhyā. The news filled me with love and I flew with all expedition to Ayodhyā, transported with joy. There I saw the grand festivities in connection with the birth of Śrī Rāma being held in the manner stated by me before. In this way I saw a number of universes in Śrī Rāma's abdomen. They were all beyond description, one could only enjoy their sight. Therein I saw once more Śrī Rāma, the abode of compassion and wisdom and the Lord of Māyā. I thought again and again; but my mind being stuck in the mire of delusion could not decide anything. I saw everything in an hour or so, and my mind began to reel at this, being seized with the utmost infatuation. Observing the confusion of my mind, Śrī Raghuvīra, the abode of mercy, laughed. And as he laughed, I was thrown out of His mouth, O wise bird."

* In the case of Mīrābāī and other saints of the middle ages God is said to have manifested Himself through images. Such a manifestation of the Lord through an image is known as an Arcāvatāra.

moment he concentrates his thoughts on Him. When he acquires facility in this practice the Sādhaka should thereafter take up the practice of mentally eliminating whatever objects may meet his eye even casually while moving from one place to another,—trees, creepers, men, beasts and birds etc.,—and replacing them by the Form of the Deity. The practice may ultimately enable him to visualize easily the Form of the Deity in everything, and in place of everything. Thereafter, through the grace of God, he may obtain a real vision of God, and then succeed in seeing God everywhere directly, and in the real sense of the term.

Speaking thus of God-realization through the practice of seeing God everywhere, the Lord now proceeds to reveal the marks and glory of the man who has thus been able to realize God:—

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥ ३१ ॥

यः who; एकत्वम् आस्थितः established in union (with Me); सर्वभूतस्थितम् residing in all beings (as their very Self); माम् Me (the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss); भजति adores; सर्वथा in all forms of activity; वर्तमानः engaged; अपि even though; सः that; योगी Yogī; मयि in Me; वर्तते abides.

The Yogī who is established in union with Me, and worships Me as residing in all beings (as their very Self); abides in Me; no matter what he does. (31)

Meditating every moment and everywhere exclusively on the Deity of his choice, the Sādhaka loses all consciousness of his own separate existence, and gets so deeply absorbed in Him that in His consciousness nothing remains but the Deity. This state of God-realization is referred to here by the words 'Ekatvam Āsthitaḥ' (established in union with Me).

Just as the element of water runs through all the modifications of water such as vapour, cloud, fog, rain-drop and snow etc., even so God and God alone pervades the whole universe consisting of animate and inanimate creation. To know and realize this fact is what is meant by worshipping the Lord residing in all beings. He who adores the Lord in this way has been declared as the greatest saint (VII.19).

The devotee who has realized God actually sees everything as God Himself. In that state whatever actions are performed by him through his body, speech and mind are, in his view, performed only in relation to God. His hands, when engaged in the service of another, render service to Him alone in that form; gratifying another by means of pleasing words, he gratifies the Lord Himself; casting his eyes on another, he casts his eyes on God alone; if he accompanies anyone to a particular place, he accompanies God Himself and moves in His direction. Thus whatever activities he performs, he performs them in God and in relation to God. That is what is meant by the statement that "he abides in God, no matter what he does."

Though directly perceiving iron in all articles made of iron such as a knife, a pair of scissors, a frying-pan, a wire, a crow-bar, a hammer, a sword and the point of an arrow, one makes appropriate use of each one of these articles; even so the God-realized devotee, while seeing God

everywhere and in every being, can behave appropriately with every being according to the injunctions of the scriptures. There will be, no doubt, a world of difference between his conduct and the conduct of an ordinary man. An ordinary man of the world may bring the greatest amount of care and consideration to bear on his dealings with his fellow-creatures; yet inasmuch as he fails to perceive God in every being, and looks upon a fellow-being as other than himself, and since his actions are bound to be tainted with self-interest at least to some extent, there is every possibility of his doing something which may be prejudicial to others' interests. But the devotee who constantly sees God everywhere and in every being will naturally perform acts which are conducive to the common good. He is utterly incapable of doing anything which may really mar others' interests even in the least degree.*

The words 'no matter what he does" occurring in this verse should not lead anyone to think that the Gītā allows full latitude to the God-realized devotee to commit even sinful deeds. For a God-realized devotee of the type mentioned here is incapable of doing anything which may be characterized as sinful. The Lord has stated in unambiguous terms that it is 'desire', which is the root of all evils (III.37); that 'desire' is the offspring of 'attachment' (II.62); and that attachment wholly disappears from the mind of the God-realized saint (II.59). Under such circumstances, it is impossible for the God-realized devotee to indulge in prohibited or sinful acts. Besides that, the statement of the Lord that "whatsoever a great man does, other men also do the same," naturally throws a great responsibility on the shoulders of the man of wisdom. That is another reason why it is not possible for him to do anything sinful.

Extolling thus the saint who has realized God through the practice of Devotion, the Lord describes below the undifferentiating outlook and glory of him who has realized God through the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga:—

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ३२ ॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; यः who; आत्मौपम्येन on the analogy of his own Self; सर्वत्र on all (beings); समम् as one; पश्यति looks; वा and; सुखम् joy; यदि वा or even; दुःखम् sorrow; सः that; योगी Yogī; परमः supreme; मतः is deemed.

Arjuna, he who looks on all as one, on the analogy of his own self, and looks upon the joy and sorrow of all with a similar eye,—such a Yogī is deemed the highest of all. (32)

Just as a man identifies himself equally with every limb of his body, even so the Yogī referred to in this verse identifies himself equally with the whole universe consisting of animate and inanimate creation. This is what is meant by looking on all as

* Bhagavān Śaṅkara also says in the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa:—
"Umā, those who are devoted to Śrī Rāma's feet,
Devoid of lust, pride and anger,
See the world as full of their own Lord;
With whom shall they quarrel, then?"

one on the analogy of his own self.

Inasmuch as a man identifies himself equally with all the limbs of his body, he looks upon the pleasurable and painful experiences of all limbs with a similar eye; even so since the Yogī referred to above identifies himself equally with the whole world, he looks upon the pleasurable and painful experiences of all with the same eye. This is what is meant by looking upon the joy and sorrow of all with a similar eye on the analogy of one's own self. The intention is to show that since the Yogī looks upon all as his own self, the whole universe is transformed into his very self. There remains nothing in this world, which has a separate identity from him. No one in this world would ever inflict the least pain on oneself in any form whatsoever. On the other hand, man is naturally engaged in unceasing and unremitting efforts to make himself happy; and while doing so he does not feel that he has put himself under any obligation or conferred any boon on himself, and does not, therefore, seek gratitude in return; nor does he take pride in his being devoted to duty. He seeks to gratify himself only because he cannot help it, because it is ingrained in his nature to do so. Even so the Yogī referred to in this verse would never inflict the least pain on any creature in any form and would constantly endeavour by natural impulse to bring happiness to all.

(The ideal of 'Universal Brotherhood' is recognized as a very high ideal in the West, and it is a high ideal indeed. But due to diversity of interests a clash is more or less unavoidable even among brothers. But there can be no diversity of interests where there is the feeling of identity, or in other words, where one regards another as his own self; and there can be no fear of a conflict where there is no diversity of interests. It is due to such lofty ideals preached in the Gītā that the gospel of the Gītā has received the highest honour even from the thinkers of the West.)

Whether the God-realized Yogī referred to in this verse is actually conscious of the joys and sorrows of the entire universe consisting of animate and inanimate creation, or they have only a seeming reality to him, is a question most difficult to answer. He can neither be said to be conscious of such experiences nor can they be said to possess a seeming reality in his eyes ! When in the eyes of the God-realized man everything other than God ceases to exist, how can he be conscious of anything else ? And if they possessed only a seeming reality in his eyes, why should he try to avoid infliction of pain on others and to gratify them ? Therefore, a God-realized soul alone knows what his actual feelings and outlook are on such matters. They cannot be expressed in words. Nevertheless, in order to give a rough idea of his point of view it may be stated that he is never actually conscious of anything but God; they only possess seeming reality to him in the eyes of the world. All the same, his actions are extremely noble, consistent and systematic.

That such a God-realized soul tries to alleviate the suffering of the whole world even though such suffering exists only in the eyes of the world, and not in the consciousness of the saint himself, is not to be wondered at. Therein lies his speciality. He performs actions in the most efficient way, even though they possess no reality in his eyes, and even though he has no selfish interest in them. Nevertheless we can form some idea of His action from the following illustration. Suppose a number of young children, playing with pebbles and stones, clods of earth and pieces of straw, take to quarrelling among themselves for these trifling and insignificant objects, and hurting one

another due to ignorance spoil their pastime. A wise man, even though realizing the futility and insignificance of their quarrel, intervenes and expostulates with them. He gives a patient hearing to both sides and cleverly tries to pacify them. The endeavours of the God-realized Yogī to alleviate the sorrows and sufferings of the afflicted world are roughly of this nature. It is impossible to form a correct idea, with the help of any analogy of the ineffable mood of a God-realized soul, who has nothing to do with wealth, honour, fame, and prestige, or any other object connected with the world, for whom nothing remains to be achieved, and in whose eyes everything other than God ceases to exist. Illustrations taken from the world do not fully represent his true nature. They serve to illustrate only a particular aspect of the truth.

The use of the adjective 'Paramaḥ' with the word 'Yogī' is intended to show that the Lord is speaking here of a God-realized soul, and not of a practising Yogī. It should be remembered that equability or even mindedness is an essential attribute of the God-realized soul, no matter through which path he has reached the goal. Wherever the Lord speaks of the God-realized soul, He stresses the importance of even-temperedness. A man may be possessed of a number of virtues; but if he is found lacking in equability, it can be safely concluded that he has not yet realized God. For one who has not yet been able to develop evenmindedness cannot be entirely free from attraction and repulsion or conceive a natural fellow-feeling for all creatures. He alone is the best or God-realized Yogī, who has attained equability.

Hearing this teaching of the Lord about equability, and finding it most difficult for him to get firmly established in that state due to restlessness of his mind, Arjuna says:—

अर्जुन उवाच

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन।
एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम्॥ ३३॥

मधुसूदन O Kṛṣṇa (*lit.*, Slayer of the demon Madhu); यः which; अयम् this; योगः Yoga; त्वया by You; साम्येन in the form of equanimity; प्रोक्तः has been spoken of; चञ्चलत्वात् owing to restlessness (of mind); अहम् I; एतस्य of this; स्थिराम् स्थितिम् stability; न not; पश्यामि perceive.

Arjuna said: Kṛṣṇa, owing to restlessness of mind I do not perceive the stability of this Yoga in the form of equanimity, which You have just spoken of. (33)

The word 'Yoga' here refers to the state of equability, which is attained as the culmination of the practices of Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Dhyānayoga, Jñānayoga etc. Although it is true that restlessness of mind interferes with the practice of Dhyānayoga alone, the word 'Yoga' cannot be interpreted in this verse as referring to Dhyānayoga. For, while the subject discussed in the verses ending with the 28 would lead us to interpret the word 'Yoga' as Dhyānayoga, verses 31 and 32 describe the attitude of the God-realized soul during his active life. Arjuna's submission also evidently relates to 'equability', described in those two verses, as the fruit of all practices. Hence the word 'Yoga' has been interpreted as meaning the Yoga of Equability.

'Restlessness' means lack of concentration; this is mainly due to attraction and repulsion. And equability can never exist in a mind which is swayed by attraction

and repulsion; for equability is incompatible with these two impulses. That is why restlessness of mind is considered as an obstacle in the attainment of equability.

Declaring restlessness of mind as an obstacle to the attainment of Yoga in the shape of equability, Arjuna now pleads that the mind is most difficult to control:—

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम्।
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम्॥ ३४॥

हि because; कृष्ण O Kṛṣṇa; मनः the mind; चञ्चलम् (is) unsteady; प्रमाथि turbulent; दृढम् tenacious; बलवत् (and) powerful; तस्य thereof; निग्रहम् subjugation; अहम् I; वायोः of the wind; इव as; सुदुष्करम् very difficult; मन्ये I regard.

For Kṛṣṇa, the mind is very unsteady, turbulent, tenacious and powerful therefore, I consider it as difficult to control as the wind. (34)

Arjuna submitted to the Lord in the preceding verse that restlessness of mind was a great obstacle in the attainment of lasting equability. The natural reply to this would be that he should subjugate the mind, and thus overcome its restlessness. But to Arjuna subjugation of the mind was a most uphill task; that is why he invites the attention of the Lord once more to the restlessness of mind.

By using the adjective 'Pramāthi' *(lit.,* that which churns) with reference to the mind, Arjuna intends to show that in addition to being unsteady as a flickering flame of light, the mind is also turbulent by nature and sets up a commotion and excitement in the body and senses even as a churner agitates milk or curd.

In verse II.60 the Lord spoke of the senses as 'turbulent' by nature, while here Arjuna calls the mind 'turbulent'. There is no contradiction; however, between the two statements inasmuch as coming in contact with the objects of enjoyment the senses tend to agitate and excite the mind and *vice versa,* and forming an unholy alliance they excite the intellect as well (II.67). That is why both the senses and the mind have been declared as 'turbulent'.

The mind is not only unsteady and turbulent, but also powerful as a mad elephant. Just as repeated thrusts of a sharp spike on the head fail to bring a powerful elephant to its senses, and it continues to act waywardly, even so though smitten again and again by the goad of discrimination, the unruly mind refuses to get out of the dreary forest of sense-enjoyments.

Apart from being unsteady, turbulent and powerful, the mind is also unyielding or tenacious as an iguana. Whatever it takes a fancy for, it clutches with all its force and more or less identifies itself with that object.

* * *

It is most difficult to control the air that courses incessantly through the body in the shape of inhalation and exhalation, through violence, reason, discrimination and force etc. Even so Arjuna deems it most difficult to control the unsteady, turbulent, tenacious and powerful mind moving constantly among the objects of enjoyment. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the second half of the verse.

* * *

The Lord draws and attracts the devotee's heart to Him. This is one reason why He is known by the name of 'Kṛṣṇa'

(*lit.*, one who attracts). Addressing the Lord by this name in the present verse, Arjuna appears to make the submission that his mind being very unsteady he finds it most difficult to control by his own efforts. But it is easy for the Lord to draw his mind to Him by His own inherent character. Arjuna, therefore, prays that his mind may be drawn and attracted by the Lord to Him.

Confirming Arjuna's view about the difficulty of controlling the mind, the Lord suggests below the ways and means of controlling the mind:—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम्।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते॥ ३५॥*

महाबाहो O mighty-armed Arjuna; **असंशयम्** without doubt; **मनः** the mind; **चलम्** (is) unsteady; **दुर्निग्रहम्** (and) difficult to curb; **तु** but; **कौन्तेय** O son of Kuntī; **अभ्यासेन** through practice; **च** and; **वैराग्येण** through dispassion; **गृह्यते** it can be controlled.

Śrī Bhagavān said: The mind is restless no doubt; and difficult to curb, Arjuna; but it can be brought under control by repeated practice (of meditation) and by the exercise of dispassion, O son of Kuntī. (35)

In order to cast the mind-substance into the mould of a desired object, the mind has repeatedly to be weaned from other objects and fixed on the object of meditation. Repetition of this attempt is what is known as 'Abhyāsa' or practice. The question that is being considered in these verses is, how to fix the mind on God. Therefore, 'Abhyāsa' or practice here consists in directing the flow of one's thoughts repeatedly towards God, the object of meditation.†

The practice referred to above should be carried on with the firm conviction that God is the supreme and almighty Lord of all, and the highest and the only Truth, and that the supreme object of life is to realize Him. Various forms of practice have been enunciated in the scriptures. Some of them are given below:—

(1) With the help of faith, reverence and steadfast reason, the mind should be repeatedly concentrated on God (VI.26).

(2) Whatever object the mind may run after, the Deity of one's choice should be dwelt upon in that very object.

(3) One should practise offering mental worship to God.

(4) One should constantly repeat, in a disinterested way, with utmost reverence and love, through speech, breath, beating of the pulse, throat or the mind, any of the names of one's Deity, such as Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Sun-god, the Divine Mother and so on, regarding such a name to be God's own name.

(5) One should repeatedly dwell on the teachings of the scriptures relating to God, with reverence and love, and try to translate

* There is a parallel aphorism in the *Yoga-Sūtras* of *Patañjali*, which runs as below:—
अभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः।
"The mind can be controlled through practice (of meditation) and dispassion" *(Yoga-Sūtras* I.12)

† तत्र स्थितौ यत्नोऽभ्यासः। *(Yoga-Sūtras* I.13)
"Of these two methods, the attempt to make the mind steady is called practice."

them into practice.

(6) One should cultivate association with God-realized souls, listen to their salutary advice with faith and devotion and try to carry them out in actual practice (XIII.25).

(7) One should offer repeated prayers to God with a sincere and agonized heart, imploring that the mind's restlessness may disappear and it may get concentrated on Him.

Besides these, there are many other forms of practice laid down in the scriptures. But one should remember in this connection that one's practice will meet with success only when it is carried on with faith and reverence, and is continued without a break for a sufficient length of time.* Suppose a Sādhaka tries to fix his mind on a particular practice today, takes up another tomorrow, and commences yet another a few days later, without pinning his faith on any one of them. Or he takes up a practice today, fails to do it tomorrow and resumes it after an interval of three or four days; or he falls a victim to ennui, loses his patience and gives up the practice. Such an inconstant, irregular and desultory practice can never lead to success.

The word 'Vairāgya' or dispassion means complete cessation of attraction and hankering for the objects of this world and the next.† Joy and sorrow fail to produce any unhealthy reaction on the mind of him who is possessed of dispassion. He gradually attains that immovable and unshakable internal detachment or consummate dispassion,‡ which does not allow the mind to be drawn by any object under any circumstance whatsoever.

There are many practices for the cultivation of dispassion, some of which are given below:—

(1) One should constantly impress on one's mind by recourse to reason, the absence of any charm, love or delight in the objects of the world.

(2) One should always remember and realize that the objects of the world are transient and subject to sorrows and evils in the shape of birth and death, old age and disease, and are the source of fear.

(3) One should study elevating scriptures revealing the real truth about God and the world.

(4) One should cultivate association with men possessed of the highest form of dispassion. In the absence of direct association, one should keep before one's mental eyes and dwell on the likenesses and lives of saints possessed of such dispassion.

(5) One should realize the ephemeral nature of the world through the sight of old, dilapidated mansions, and the ruins of deserted towns and villages.

(6) Perceiving the one and indivisible existence of Brahma, one should refuse to recognize the separate existence of anything else.

(7) One should hear again and again, from the lips of qualified souls, the indescribable virtues, glory, truth, love and mysteries of God and the glories of His divine sports as well as of His transcendental beauty and sweetness, and knowing the truth about them should have full faith in them and feel enraptured by them.

Similar to those mentioned above, there

* स तु दीर्घकालनैरन्तर्यसत्कारासेवितो दृढभूमिः। (*Ibid.*, I.14)

† दृष्टानुश्रविकविषयवितृष्णस्य वशीकारसंज्ञा वैराग्यम्। (*Ibid.*, I.15)

‡ तत्परं पुरुषख्यातेर्गुणवैतृष्ण्यम्। (*Ibid.*, I.16)

"Supreme, or the highest form of dispassion represents absence of thirst for all the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti. It is attained through the Knowledge of Puruṣa or Spirit, who is altogether different from Prakṛti."

are other practices also, which may be adopted with advantage for the cultivatiion of dispassion.

Constant 'practice' and cultivation of dispassion, both are necessary for bringing the mind under control. 'Practice' is like a beautiful channel for the flow of thought-currents in the direction of God, and 'dispassion' is like an embankment to restrain the flow of the mind towards the objects of enjoyment. But it should be borne in mind that they are helpful to each other. Practice promotes dispassion and *vice versa*. Therefore, the mind can be subdued and brought under control even by adopting one of these methods in the proper way.

Arjuna has been addressed in this verse by the term 'Mahābāhu', that is, one possessed of long and powerful arms, because he was a world-renowned hero, who had vanquished in battle the greatest of warriors among celestials, demons and mortal men. The intention of using this mode of address is to remind Arjuna of his own prowess and encourage him to fight and conquer the mind. The Lord gives a clear hint to him that it does not befit a hero like him to feel afraid of the mind and lose heart; if he takes courage, he is sure to win.

The foregoing verse suggested the means of subduing the mind. The question here arises: Where lies the harm if the mind is not subdued ? In answer to this, the Lord says:—

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।
वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥ ३६ ॥

असंयतात्मना By him whose mind is not subdued; **योगः** yoga; **दुष्प्रापः** (is) difficult to achieve; **तु** while; **वश्यात्मना यतता** by him who has brought the mind under control and is (ceaselessly) striving; **उपायतः** through practice; **अवाप्तुम् शक्यः** can be (easily) attained; **इति** such (is); **मे** My; **मतिः** conviction.

Yoga is difficult of achievement for one whose mind is not subdued; by him; however who has the mind under control, and is ceaselessly striving, it can be easily attained through practice. Such is My conviction. **(36)**

The mind of him who has not brought it under control by 'practice' and exercise of dispassion is a slave to attraction and repulsion; and impelled by these it continues to frisk and frolick in the world like a mischievous monkey. And when the mind is so deeply attached to enjoyments, his intellect also remains unstable and 'scattered in all directions, (II.41—44). That is why it is stated that the attainment of equability is extremely difficult for one who has no control over the mind.

A subdued mind gives up all its vagrancy and turbulent nature, and loses its vehemence and perversity. Like a simple, unsophisticated, quiet and submissive disciple, it becomes so obedient that it tamely applies itself at any moment to whatever pursuit it may be directed to for any length of time. It no longer shows the least demur in carrying out one's behests nor does it feel any urge to roam about under the prompting of the senses. It does not desist from a particular pursuit of its own accord, nor does it fall a victim to ennui; nor again does it make any mischief. With great composure it gets so thoroughly absorbed in the object of meditation that it becomes difficult even to

distinguish its separate identity. These are the marks of a subdued mind.

The word 'Tu' in the present verse has been used to distinguish the man who has subdued his mind from him who has not yet been able to control it.

Even after attaining control over the mind, if one does not strive hard to merge the mind completely in God, he will not achieve the Yoga of equability as a matter of course. Therefore, in order to point out the necessity of effort even after that, the Yogī possessed of a subdued mind has been spoken of as 'ceaselessly striving'.

There are many practices for the attainment of equability after the mind has been properly subdued. Some of them are given below:—

(1) Renouncing all objects of enjoyment as well as the desire for them, the mind should be constantly and all the time fixed on God, the embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss, through reason which is not only purified and steadfast but also endowed with discrimination and dispassion, and devoted to God; and no other thought should be allowed to enter the mind (VI.25).

(2) The Sādhaka should try to see the one all-pervading God, the embodiment of eternal Knowledge and Bliss, as filling up the entire universe, consisting of animate and inanimate creation, on all sides, both within and without, above and below, and should regard himself, as also the whole of the objective world, as identical with God, even as the same ether permeates the cloud on all sides, within and without, above and below, and is its material cause (XIII.15).

(3) Realizing that whatever activities are being carried on in this world through body, senses and mind are being performed by the Guṇas, or in other words, it is the senses which are acting on the objects of senses, one should recognize oneself as altogether unconnected with those activities and as their witness. And establishing oneself in identity with God, the eternal embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss, one should perceive through the cosmic intellect all objects as ephemeral and existing in the mere thought of that formless and infinite Consciousness which is his own Self (V.8-9; XIV.19).

(4) Regarding any of the embodied Forms of God, such as that of Śrī Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Sun-god, the Divine Mother, or the Universal Form, as the supreme Form of God, the witness of all hearts, all-pervading, omniscient, all powerful, supremely compassionate and lovable, one should install an image or picture of the Deity, according to one's choice, or should mentally realize Him as actually present, either within or without one's heart, and should constantly fix one's mind on Him with utmost reverence and love and worship Him by offering leaves, flowers and fruits or other articles of worship, and perform Japa of His name.

(5) Duties enjoined by the scriptures should be performed without attachment or the desire for fruit, and remaining even-tempered in success and failure (II.48); or actions, such as the performance of sacrifices and service, practising charity and penance etc., enjoined by the scriptures, should be performed with faith and reverence for the sake of God alone, and regarding everything as belonging to God (XII.10); or, mentally surrendering all actions as well as oneself to God, and renouncing the feeling of 'mine' and attachment, and constantly remembering God, one should behave like a tool in the hands of God, gladly doing whatever and in whatever manner He gets one to do (XVIII.57).

There are many other practices besides these; and the practice recommended for the subjugation of mind, if carried on with

reverence and love even after obtaining control over the mind, for the realization of God, will also help the Sādhaka to attain the Yoga of Equability.

Subjugation of mind having been declared as most essential for the attainment of perfection in Yoga, the question arises: What becomes of the Sādhaka after death, who possesses no control over the mind, and yet having faith in the practice of Yoga strives for God-realization? This is what Arjuna asks in the following verse:—

अर्जुन उवाच

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः।
अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति॥ ३७॥

कृष्ण O Kṛṣṇa; श्रद्धया with faith; उपेतः (one who is) endowed; अयतिः (but) who has not (yet) been able to subdue his passions; योगात् from Yoga; चलितमानसः whose mind (therefore) is diverted (at the time of death); योगसंसिद्धिम् perfection in Yoga (God-realization); अप्राप्य failing to reach; काम् what; गतिम् fate; गच्छति meets with.

Arjuna said: Kṛṣṇa, what becomes of the soul who, though endowed with faith, has not been able to subdue his passions, and whose mind is therefore diverted from Yoga (at the time of death), and who thus fails to reach perfection in Yoga (God-realization) ? (37)

The preceding verse pointed out that Yoga was difficult of achievement for one whose mind had not been properly subdued. That statement served as the ground or occasion for the present question on the part of Arjuna. Besides this, slackness of effort is out of question in the case of a man endowed with faith; even so it is out of question for a subdued mind to get diverted on any account. These are the reasons why the word 'Ayatiḥ' in this verse has been interpreted to mean one 'possessed of an unsubdued mind', and not one who is 'lacking in effort'.

The word 'Yoga' stands here for equability attained through any of the disciplines of Sāṅkhyayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Dhyānayoga and Karmayoga etc., carried on with the object of God-realization. A mind which loses its balance or ceases to think of God is said to be diverted from Yoga. This diversion of the mind from Yoga at the time of death may be due to various reasons, such as restlessness of the mind, attachment, desire, physical pain, loss of consciousness and so on.

The word 'Yogasaṁsiddhim', or perfection in Yoga, stands here for God-realization, which is the fruit of equability attained through the practice of any of the forms of Yoga mentioned above. And failure to realize God owing to diversion of the mind, at the time of death, either from equability or from the thought of God is what is meant here by failure to achieve perfection in Yoga.

In answer to Arjuna's question, the Lord speaks of the state of existence attained by the Sādhaka after death and refers to his next birth, which make it definitely clear that Arjuna's question relates to the Sādhaka's state at the time of death. Moreover, the word 'Gati' also is generally used to denote the state attained after death; this also goes to confirm the view that the question refers to the state at the time of death. The words, 'Yogāt Calitamānasaḥ cannot, therefore, be taken to mean one who has given up the practice of Yoga and taken to sense-enjoyments even during his life-time.

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि॥ ३८॥

महाबाहो O Kṛṣṇa of mighty arms; **ब्रह्मणः पथि** from the path leading to God-realization; **विमूढः** strayed; **अप्रतिष्ठः** without anything to stand upon; **छिन्नाभ्रम् इव** like the torn cloud; **उभयविभ्रष्टः** deprived of both God-realization and heavenly enjoyment; **कच्चित् न नश्यति** is he not lost?

Kṛṣṇa, strayed from the path leading to God-realization and without anything to stand upon, is he not lost like the torn cloud, deprived of both God-realization and heavenly enjoyment ? (38)

Diversion of the mind from practices leading to God-realization due to restlessness of the mind and lack of discrimination and dispassion, and consequent failure to realize God is what is meant by straying from the path leading to God-realization and having nothing to stand upon.

Arjuna intends here to show that a Sādhaka who has performed action all his life without any desire for fruit surely does not obtain the enjoyments of heaven after death, and his mind being diverted from practices leading to God-realization at the time of death he fails to realize God. Arjuna, therefore, apprehends that, just as a piece of cloud torn from the main body of a cloud gets dissolved, unless united with another cloud, even so deprived of both heaven and God-realization, the Sādhaka referred to above gets lost, and suffers a spiritual fall.

Raising the above question, Arjuna now prays to the Lord for its solution:—

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः।
त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते॥ ३९॥

कृष्ण O Kṛṣṇa; **मे** my; **एतत्** this; **संशयम्** doubt; **अशेषतः** completely; **छेत्तुम्** to slash; **अर्हसि** it behoves You; **हि** because; **त्वदन्यः** other than You; **अस्य संशयस्य** of this doubt; **छेत्ता** one who slashes; **न उपपद्यते** may not be (easily) found.

Kṛṣṇa, it behoves You to slash this doubt of mine completely; for none other than You can be found, who can tear this doubt. (39)

Here Arjuna seeks to know something about the existence of the Sādhaka after death. Life after death is a mystery which no one can solve with the help of reason and argument. He alone who is thoroughly acquainted with all the effects of Karma, the laws of the universe and the secrets of the other worlds can penetrate it. Celestials, who are the guardians of the different regions, sages, seers and ascetics possessing the power of unrestricted access to all the different regions, and Yogīs who can see and know events taking place in the different worlds, are aware of these things to a certain extent; but their knowledge too is limited in its scope. The entire secret is known only to God, who is the sole Lord of the universe. Arjuna was already aware of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's power and glory. Besides this, he had heard shortly before from the Lord's own lips that He possessed a knowledge of the innumerable births of Arjuna (IV.5), that He was unborn, immortal and the Lord of all creatures (IV.6), that

He created with due regard to their respective Guṇas or traits and Karmas or actions (IV.13), that He was the 'supreme Lord of all the worlds' (V.29); this had strengthened Arjuna's faith in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divinity. It is, therefore, that he professes his faith, in the Lord by submitting that it would not be possible for him to find anyone other than the Lord, who could completely dispel the doubt of his mind, and that He alone is capable of doing it. He means to say that Śrī Kṛṣṇa being the omniscient and almighty Lord, the Knower of all hearts and the Maker and Administrator of all laws, the secret of the states of existence after death of the infinite number of Jīvas belonging to the countless millions of universes must be fully known to Him, and that all incidents that were taking place in the different worlds at that time, had taken place before or were going to take place thereafter were ever like an open book to Him. It was, therefore, extremely easy for Him to reveal the fate of the Yogīs who strayed away from the path of Yoga. When the Lord Himself out of His supreme compassion was present before Arjuna, whom else should he ask about it, and really speaking no one else was capable of unravelling the mystery. Therefore, Arjuna humbly prays to the Lord to reveal the truth to him and clear the doubt of his mind.

Arjuna's question was whether the Sādhaka who strayed from the path of Yoga got lost like the torn cloud, being deprived of both God-realization and heavenly enjoyment. The Lord vouchsafes His reply to that question in the following verse:—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते।
न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥ ४० ॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; तस्य for him; न neither; इह here; विनाशः fall; विद्यते (there) is; न nor; अमुत्र hereafter; एव either; हि for; तात O dear one; कल्याणकृत् who strives for self-redemption (i.e., God-realization); कश्चित् anyone; दुर्गतिम् evil destiny; न not; गच्छति meets with.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Dear Arjuna, there is no fall for him either here or hereafter. For none who strives for self-redemption (i.e., God-realization) ever meets with evil destiny. **(40)**

Degradation from the level of existence already attained by one is what is meant by the word 'Vināśaḥ' in this verse. Hence if the Sādhaka referred to above is reborn on this earth, he is not degraded to a state lower than that already attained by him. And if he ascends to higher regions such as heaven he meets with no fall either; on the other hand, he is exalted to a higher position. In this way he does not meet with a fall either here or hereafter. Wherever he abides he continues to advance steadily on the Godward path. The Lord has thus briefly answered Arjuna's query regarding the possibility of the Sādhaka being deprived both of God-realization and heavenly enjoyment. The idea is that the Sādhaka is neither deprived of the enjoyments of this world or of the next nor of God-realization in the shape of perfection in Yoga.

The second half of the verse says that a Sādhaka striving for God-realization never goes to doom. Here it may be contended that since everyone has a number of sins

committed in previous lives outstanding against him, there is every possibility of his meeting, with an evil destiny after death in consequence of those sins. In this connection let us take the example of a judgment. A debtor who, though in default in the matter of payment, is not dishonest in intention and has handed over all that he possessed to his creditor. He has also been paying all his surplus earnings to the creditor, and sincerely desires to continue this till the debt is cleared off. Under such circumstances, a creditor who is possessed of a tender heart spares him the ignominy of civil imprisonment and allows him time to clear the outstandings so long as he maintains his honesty of intention. Even so the all-merciful God, perceiving the sincerity of the Sādhaka striving for God-realization, suspends the requital of his sins and affords him an opportunity to redeem himself by following a particular course of spiritual discipline. When an ordinary creditor allows his debtor an opportunity to clear his debt, there is no wonder that God, who is supremely compassionate, should afford the Sādhaka an opportunity to free himself from bondage.

To this it may be objected that the royal sage Bharata, who had been carrying on spiritual practices purely with the motive of self-redemption, was thrown into the womb of a deer as the Paurāṇika story goes. How are we to reconcile this with the above statement of the Lord? Our reply to this contention is that although Bharata had reached an advanced stage in his Sādhanā, he fell a victim to infatuation through compassion and developed attachment for a young deer. The result was that, at the time of death, he lost sight of his goal and his thought was centred on the deer, which brought him the life of a deer in the next birth; for it is an inexorable law of Nature that whatever object one thinks of at the time of death, that very object he unquestionably attains at the next birth (VIII.6). But though born as an animal, Bharata cannot be said to have met with an evil destiny; for even in that existence he distinctly remembered the incidents of his previous life and continued to lead a life as pure and regulated as an advanced Sādhaka, renouncing all forms of attachment and infatuation. Possessed of great discrimination and living on dry leaves alone, he attained the body of a Brāhmaṇa in his very next birth and speedily attained the supreme state by force of habit formed in the previous life (VI.44). The example of Bharata, therefore, does not in any way disprove the principle laid down in the present verse. The moral that we should draw from this story is that the goal of God-realization should never be lost sight of.

Again, it may be urged in this connection that we come across many people in this world, who, though associating with holy men and practising adoration and meditation etc., for their spiritual advancement are nevertheless seen perpetrating sinful acts. What happens to such people? In our humble opinion even such people do not meet with an evil destiny. Those who have faith in the scriptures as well as in exalted souls get fully convinced that acts of sin will bring them terrible sufferings and the dreadful tortures of hell. Therefore, they try to avoid even those sins which are apt to be perpetrated by them due to previous habit. Side by side they carry on the practices of meditation and adoration etc., so that they gradually attain purity of heart. Under such circumstances, there remains no cause for deliberate commission of sin on their part. Therefore, even if one is a sinner by nature, the salutary influence of Satsaṅga and the practices of adoration and meditation will soon enable him to get

rid of the habit of committing sins and make him virtuous. He gradually rises in the scale of evolution and cannot suffer a fall (IX.30-31).

The word 'Tāta' is an expression of endearment. By using it as a mode of address for Arjuna in this verse, the Lord assures him that He regarded him not only as a great devotee but as a dear friend as well. He means to convey thereby that when an ordinary Sādhaka who strives for His realization does not meet with an evil destiny, but rises in the scale of evolution, there should be no cause for Arjuna, who was so dear to the Lord, to worry at all about his fate.

The statement of the Lord that the Sādhaka fallen from Yoga does not meet with an evil fate, raises the question: What fate does he actually meet with? Anticipating this question, the Lord says:—

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः।
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते॥ ४१॥

योगभ्रष्टः he who has fallen from Yoga; **पुण्यकृताम्** inhabited by those who perform meritorious deeds; **लोकान्** the worlds; **प्राप्य** reaching; **शाश्वतीः समाः** for countless years; **उषित्वा** having resided (there); **शुचीनाम् श्रीमताम्** of pious and wealthy men; **गेहे** in the house; **अभिजायते** takes birth.

He who has fallen from Yoga, obtains the higher worlds (heaven etc.) to which men of meritorious deeds alone are entitled, and having resided there for countless years, takes birth in the house of pious and wealthy men. (41)

A Sādhaka following the path of Knowledge, Devotion, Meditation or Action and whose mind gets diverted from the goal at the moment of death, due to faults like restlessness etc., worldly attachments, physical ailment and other such causes is known as fallen from Yoga.

The above verse says that such a man attains the higher worlds to which men of meritorious deeds alone are entitled and subsequently takes birth in the house of pious and wealthy men. From this it is clear that he neither goes to hell nor takes birth in the lower forms of life. But it may be contended here that celestial regions which are inhabited by men of meritorious deeds, as well as the households of wealthy men abound in objects of enjoyments, so that one who goes to these regions or takes birth in such households has every chance of getting attached to sense-enjoyments and may also take to sinful deeds later on for obtaining such enjoyments. Both these states, being thus instrumental in bringing about one's downfall, are virtually nothing short of an evil destiny.

Our answer to this contention is that the expression 'Puṇyakṛtāṁ Lokān' (worlds inhabited by men of meritorious deeds) covers all the celestial worlds located on a higher plane than the earth right up to Brahmaloka or the abode of Brahmā (the creator). The practice of the Yogas mentioned above is so efficacious and meritorious that the Sādhaka fallen from this practice never goes to the regions where he may fall a victim to sense-enjoyments and meet his doom, nor does he take birth in the house of a wealthy man who is devoid of virtue and has a vile conduct, where he may bring about his own downfall. That is why the Lord adds the adjective 'Śucīnām' with the

word 'Śrīmatām' and thereby shows that he is born in the house of pious and noble souls who are not only wealthy but possess a spotless moral character as well. This cannot even indirectly be called an evil destiny.

It is attachment to one's actions and their fruit which makes them bear fruit (II.47). The length of one's residence in the higher world for enjoying the fruit of one's meritorious acts depends, therefore, on the degree of attachment that lies hidden in one's heart. As for those who have no attachment for enjoyment and are possessed of dispassion ascend not to the higher regions but are directly born in the family of Yogīs.

Speaking thus of destiny of ordinary Sādhakas fallen from Yoga the Lord now goes to show the enviable fate of Sādhakas of an advanced type, who are free from attachment:—

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम्।
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम्॥ ४२॥

अथवा or else; धीमताम् योगिनाम् of enlightened Yogīs; एव indeed; कुले in a family; भवति may be born; यत् which; ईदृशम् such; जन्म birth (there is); एतत् that; लोके in (this) world; हि verily; दुर्लभतरम् (is) very difficult to obtain.

Or (if he is possessed of dispassion) he is born in the family of enlightened Yogīs; but such a birth in this world is very difficult to obtain. (42)

The indeclinable 'Athavā' has been used to distinguish the Sādhakas mentioned in this verse from those referred to in the previous one.

Some contend here that all those who fall away from Yoga invariably ascend to the higher regions, and after enjoying the pleasures obtained in those worlds some of them take birth in the house of pious and wealthy men, while others are born in a family of Yogīs. This interpretation, however, does not appear to be correct for the simple reason that it would be a sort of punishment for the Sādhaka who is possessed of genuine dispassion to be compelled to reside for a number of years in the celestial regions and enjoy the pleasures of those regions. Such postponement of God-realization cannot be the reward of true dispassion. Therefore, the interpretation that we have put on this verse is the only correct intrepretation.

The fact that such men of dispassion are born in a family of Yogīs proves it beyond doubt that this last type of Yogīs must belong to the householder class; for it goes without saying that children are born in one's married life alone. And the use of the word 'Dhīmatām' for such Yogīs leaves no room for doubt that real knowledge of the truth about God can be attained by all, no matter to what order or class they belong. The Gītā conclusively establishes this truth (III.20; IV.19; XVIII.56) and a number of instances can be quoted from other scriptures as well in support of this contention. Great souls like Maharṣi Vasiṣṭha, Yājñavalkya, Vyāsa, Janaka, Aśvapati and Raikva attained Knowledge even while they lived as householders.

Interpreting the word 'Yoginām' in this verse as a practising Yogī rather than an illumined Yogī, will frustrate the use of the adjective. 'Dhīmatām', the meaning of which is obvious. Besides, by speaking of birth in the house of such Yogīs as exceedingly difficult to attain (Durlabhataram) the Lord

makes it clear that such Yogīs must be far superior to the pious and wealthy men referred to in the previous verse. Therefore, it is but reasonable to interpret the word 'Yoginām' qualified by the adjective 'Dhīmatām' as meaning those who have reached perfection in the form of enlightenment.

Facilities that may be obtained for the practice of Yoga through birth in a family of Yogīs cannot be had either in heaven, or in the house of rich men, or anywhere else in the world. One who is born in a family of Yogīs finds oneself placed from the very beginning of one's career in an environment which is most favourable to the practice of Yoga, so that one can start such practices very early in life; and, secondly, the Śrutis prove that one born in the family of a man of Knowledge cannot remain merged in ignorance.*

Considering the glory and greatness of illumined souls, whose very contact has been recognized as difficult to obtain,† almost inaccessible and yet infallible, the value of a birth in their family cannot be overestimated. Therefore, it is but reasonable to speak of such a birth as very difficult to obtain.

The next verse describes the situation in which the Sādhaka fallen from Yoga finds himself on taking birth in a family of Yogīs:—

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम्।
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन॥ ४३॥

तत्र there, in that birth; तम् that; पौर्वदेहिकम् acquired in his previous birth; बुद्धिसंयोगम् spiritual insight (i.e., latencies of even-mindedness); लभते he (automatically) regains; च and; कुरुनन्दन O delighter of the Kurus, Arjuna; ततः through that; भूयः again (with renewed vigour); संसिद्धौ for perfection (in the form of God-realization); यतते strives.

Arjuna, he automatically regains in that birth the spiritual insight of his previous birth; and through that he strives, harder than ever, for perfection (in the form of God-realization). (43)

The verse immediately preceding this speaks of the birth of a Yogabhraṣṭa in a family of Yogīs and also shows that a life in the celestial regions does not intervene between this birth and the previous one. Hence the word 'Tatra' should be taken to refer to his birth in a family of Yogīs, and not in that of pious and wealthy men. Needless to say that the Sādhaka who takes birth in the house of pious and wealthy men too feels drawn towards God and is withdrawn from worldly enjoyments by force of habit formed in his previous birth. This is made clear in the next verse.

The word 'Buddhi' forming part of the compound 'Buddhisaṁyogam' in this verse refers to the partial evenmindedness acquired by the Sādhaka through the practice of Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Dhyānayoga or Jñānayoga carried on in his previous birth.

---

* नास्याब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति। तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति।
(Muṇḍ. Up. III. ii.9)

"In the family of a Knower of Brahma, none remains ignorant of Brahma. Transcending both grief and sin, and freed from the knot of ignorance in the heart, the member of such a family becomes immortal, i.e., attains freedom for all time from birth and death."

† महत्सङ्गस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च। (Nārada: *Aphorisms on Bhakti. 36)*

The latencies of this equability pre-existing in his mind are automatically roused by the favourable environment in which he finds himself in his new birth. This is what is meant by his regaining the spiritual insight of his previous birth. And the indeclinable 'Tataḥ' formed from the demonstrative pronoun 'Tat' (that) by adding the suffix 'Tas' refers to the noun immediately preceding it, *viz.*, 'Buddhisaṁyogam'. That is to say, due to the latencies of equability acquired by him in his previous birth being roused in him, the Sādhaka strives for God-realization with greater vigour than before.

Now, while describing the situation of the Yogabhraṣṭa who takes birth in the family of pious and wealthy men, the value of seeking enlightenment on Yoga is brought out in the next verse:—

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः।
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते॥ ४४॥

सः he (the other one who takes birth in the family of pious and wealthy men); अवशः under the sway of his senses; अपि even though; तेन पूर्वाभ्यासेन by force of the aforesaid habit acquired in his previous birth; एव only; हि verily; ह्रियते feels drawn (towards God); योगस्य of Yoga (in the form of even-mindedness); जिज्ञासुः the seeker of enlightenment; अपि even; शब्दब्रह्म the Vedas (i.e., the fruit of actions performed with some interested motive as laid down in the Vedas); अतिवर्तते transcends.

The other one (who takes birth in a rich family), though under the sway of his senses, feels drawn towards God by force of the habit acquired in his previous birth; nay, even the seeker of enlightenment on Yoga (in the form of even-mindedness) transcends the fruit of actions performed with some interested motive as laid down in the Vedas. (44)

The word 'Saḥ' in this verse has been interpreted as referring to the Yogabhraṣṭa who is born in the house of pious and wealthy men, and not the other one mentioned in the previous verse; for he who is born directly in a family of Yogīs, having been shown above as full of dispassion, cannot be believed to be under the sway of his senses; hence the use of the words 'Avaśaḥ Api' does not fit in with his description. Besides, since he is born in a family of Yogīs, where he automatically gets the benefit of Satsaṅga (talks on spiritual matters) it does not appear reasonable to hold the habit of his previous birth alone as responsible for his feeling drawn towards God. Therefore, it is but reasonable to interpret the word 'Saḥ' as referring to the Yogabhraṣṭa who is born in the family of the rich.

The house of wealthy men who are at the same time pious and devoted to right and virtuous conduct does not offer any opportunity to its children to get entangled in enjoyments as the house of ordinary rich men does; nevertheless, if for any reason the Yogabhraṣṭa falls a victim to the lure of objects of enjoyment like wife, progeny, wealth, honour and fame etc., he is impelled by force of habit formed in his previous birth to take up practices leading to God-realization. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the word 'Api' with 'Avaśaḥ'.

Latencies of previous birth are mainly responsible for drawing the heart of a man who is given over to worldly enjoyments

towards God, and thus freeing him from the clutches of worldly enjoyments. This is the force of the indeclinable 'Eva' going with the word 'Pūrvābhyāsena', used in this verse.

The use of the indeclinable 'Api' after 'Jijñāsuḥ' is intended to extol Yoga in the form of equability. The Lord intends to show that when even he who seeks enlightenment on Yoga, possesses faith in Yoga, and strived to attain it, transcends the enjoyments of this world as well as the next, which are obtained as the fruit of action performed with an interested motive as laid down in the Vedas, it should be much easier for the Yogabhraṣṭa who has been practising Yoga from birth to birth to attain that state.

Describing thus the destiny of the Yogabhraṣṭa who is born in the family of the rich, and extolling the seeker of enlightenment on Yoga, the Lord discusses once more the destiny of the Yogabhraṣṭa who takes birth in the family of Yogīs:—

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः।
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम्॥ ४५॥

तु but; प्रयत्नात् diligently; यतमानः practising; योगी the Yogī; अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धः attaining perfection (in this very life) with the help of latencies of many births; संशुद्धकिल्बिषः (and) being thoroughly purged of sin; ततः forthwith; परम् गतिम् the supreme state; याति attains.

The Yogī, however, who diligently takes up the practice attains perfection in this very life with the help of latencies of many births, and being thoroughly purged of sin, forthwith reaches the supreme state. (45)

The indeclinable 'Tu' has been used to differentiate the Yogabhraṣṭa who is born in a family of Yogīs from him who takes birth in the family of the rich, as well as from the seeker of enlightenment on Yoga.

Verse 43 stated that the Yogabhraṣṭa who is born in a family of Yogīs strives in that life harder than ever for the attainment of perfection in Yoga. The adjectival phrase 'Prayatnādyatamānaḥ' (diligently taking up practice) has been used with the word 'Yogī' in order to show that it is that very Yogī who reaches the supreme state. The fruit of his diligent, effort, which was not mentioned in that verse, has been explicitly stated here.

Verse 43 also stated that the latencies of practice carried on by that Yogabhraṣṭa in his previous birth are automatically roused as a result of his taking birth in a family of Yogīs. The adjective 'Anekajanma-saṁsiddhaḥ' has been used in this verse to make that very point clear. The intention is to show that the practice carried on by him through many previous births, as well as in this birth, is responsible for this attaining perfection in Yoga or reaching the culmination of his Sādhanā; for it is with the help of latencies of his previous births that he strives harder than ever in this birth and thereby reaches the culmination of his practice.

The use of the word 'Saṁśuddhakilbiṣaḥ is intended to show that no trace of sin is left in the Yogī who diligently takes up the practice of Yoga.

Realization of God, the supreme Reality is what is referred to here as attainment of supreme state. It is this very state which is variously known as attainment of the supreme Goal, attainment of the supreme Abode and attainment of eternal Peace.

Concluding the topic of the destiny of a Yogabhraṣṭa, the Lord now glorifies the Yogī and exhorts Arjuna to become a Yogī:—

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन॥ ४६॥

योगी the Yogī; तपस्विभ्यः to the ascetics; अधिकः (is) superior; ज्ञानिभ्यः to those versed in sacred lore; अपि even; अधिकः superior; मतः is held; च and; कर्मिभ्यः to those who perform action (with some interested motive); योगी the Yogī; अधिकः (is) superior; तस्मात् therefore; अर्जुन O Arjuna; योगी a Yogī; भव be.

The Yogī is superior to the ascetics; he is regarded as superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogī is also superior to those who perform action with some interested motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogī. (46)

Renunciation of worldly enjoyments accompanied by sense-control, and endurance of all sufferings connected with the mind, senses and body, as a form of religious duty and with an interested motive, is what is known as 'Tapas' or askesis; and he who practises 'Tapas' or askesis is called a 'Tapasvī' or ascetic.

The word 'Jñānibhyaḥ' in the present verse stands neither for the wise man who has realized God, nor for the Sādhaka who takes to the practice of Jñānayoga for the realization of God. In the present context it refers to the man of learning who has understood things with the help of his intellect and reason and in the light of scriptures and the teachings of the preceptor.

The word 'Karmibhyaḥ' here stands for those who perform sacrifice, worship, charity, service and other noble actions enjoined by the scriptures, with the motive of obtaining wife, progeny, wealth and the enjoyments of the higher worlds etc.

The ascetic as well as the man of learning both, being actuated by interested motives, could have been easily covered by the word 'Karmibhyaḥ'. Hence there was no necessity of mentioning them separately. But the word 'Karmibhyaḥ' has not been used in such a wide sense. The word refers only to those who perform duties prescribed in the scriptures such as sacrifice, charity, etc., in which action is predominant. In the ascetic, however, control of mind and senses and not action is the dominant factor. Even so the man of learning is primarily a man of intellect. Keeping this distinction in view, the Lord has thought fit to mention the ascetic and the man of learning separately and did not include them in the category of Karmīs.

The word 'Yogī' in this verse stands for one who has attained perfection in the shape of even-mindedness through any of the Yogas, such as Jñānayoga, Dhyānayoga, Bhaktiyoga, and Karmayoga. In this connection it should be remembered that the Gītā recognizes only two main disciplines or paths, *viz.*, the path of Knowledge or Jñānayoga and the path of Action or Karmayoga. Bhaktiyoga is the same as Karmayoga. Emphasis on Bhakti or Devotion gives it the name of Bhaktiyoga; whereas emphasis on action gives it the appellation of Karmayoga, Dhyānayoga, or meditation, is helpful in the practice of both Jñānayoga and Karmayoga. Practised with a feeling of identity with God, it proves helpful in Jñānayoga; and carried on with a consciousness of one's separate existence, it is helpful in Karmayoga.

Declaring in the preceding verse that the Yogī excelled all, the Lord exhorted Arjuna to become a Yogī. But he reserved His definite opinion as to which of the many practices discussed by Him in course of these chapters, such as Jñānayoga, Dhyānayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Karmayoga, should be taken up for practice by Arjuna. It is, therefore, that the Lord now draws Arjuna to Himself by calling the man who offers Him exclusive love as the best among Yogīs.

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना।
श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः॥ ४७॥

सर्वेषाम् योगिनाम् of all Yogīs; अपि too; यः (the Yogī) who; श्रद्धावान् full of reverence endowed with faith; मद्गतेन अन्तरात्मना with his mind focussed on Me; माम् Me; भजते (constantly) adores; सः he; मे by Me; युक्ततमः the best Yogī; मतः is considered.

Of all Yogīs, again, he who devoutly worships Me with his mind focussed on Me is considered by Me to be the best Yogī. (47)

The term 'Yoga' represents the culmination of all the practices for God-realization discussed in verses 24—30 of Chapter IV under the name of 'sacrifice', and all other practices for God-realization mentioned so far in the Gītā. Therefore, there may be diverse types or classes of Yogīs, following different paths. All these have been referred to in this verse by the term 'Yogīnām' combined with 'Api' and the adjective 'Sarveṣām', which follows it.

He whose belief in the existence of God, in His Avatāras or Descents, in His teachings, in His incomprehensible and infinite, divine virtues, in His name and stories, in His glory, power, greatness and majesty, is as strong and unshakable as his belief in anything directly cognized by his senses, is called a 'devout' or 'faithful' soul.

He who comes to realize the Lord as the highest Being, the repository of all virtues, all-powerful, and the highest object of love, develops exclusive love for Him, with the result that his mind and intellect get exclusively and irrevocably fixed on Him. Such a mind and intellect are referred to here by the words 'Madgatena Antarātmanā'.

It is no doubt true that one's mind and intellect may be focussed on the Lord even through fear and hatred; and the fixing of one's mind and intellect on God, due to whatever feeling it may be, brings the highest blessing on the soul. But the Lord is speaking here of applying one's mind and intellect to Him through love, and not through fear and hatred. For he whose mind and intellect get riveted on God through fear and hatred can neither be called devout, nor can he be recognized as a supreme Yogī. Immediately after this, the Lord introduces the very first verse of Chapter VII with the phrase 'Mayyāsaktamanāḥ' (with the mind attached to Me) which is indicative of exclusive love. Besides this, it is the practice of lovingly devoting one's mind and intellect to Him that has been extolled by the Lord from place to place in the Gītā (VII.17; IX.14; X.10). Therefore, it is but reasonable to take the words 'Madgatena' as implying attachment or love.

The word 'Mām', used by the Lord with reference to him, stands for the Integral Brahma or the Supreme Person, comprising both the Qualified and Absolute aspects, the greatest repository of the highest knowledge, strength, energy, prowess and splendour, the infinite ocean of beauty, sweetness,

magnanimity and compassion, the greatest friend and well-wisher, the supreme lover, and embodiment of transcendent and incomprehensible Bliss, eternally existent, unborn and immortal, the knower of all hearts, omniscient, all-powerful adorned with all the divine virtues, the universal Soul, enacting various forms of enchanting divine sports possessing the highest and incomprehensible glory, creating, preserving and destroying the entire universe as a mere play through the agency of His Māyā or deluding power, the Ocean of Bliss, nay, the very embodiment and an eternal fount of joy.

The verb 'Bhajate' means withdrawing the mind and intellect, from all other objects and focussing them exclusively on the Lord, and constantly adoring and meditating on Him with supreme faith and love every moment of one's conscious existence as well as during sleep, and while carrying on all forms of bodily activity as well as in seclusion.

By calling such a devotee as the greatest Yogī, the Lord is glorifying His loving devotee. He appears to say that ordinarily speaking the ascetic, the man of Knowledge and the man of action, all are dear to Him, and dearer than all these is the Yogī who is engaged in spiritual practice for His Realization. But the devotee who offers his exclusive love to Him knowing Him in His entirety, and regarding Him as the supreme object of love keeps his mind and intellect focussed on Him day and night, without requiring, craving for or caring for anything else, and who like the child depending on its mother, knows no one else than God, is the dearest object of His heart.

A mother's heart is ever overflowing with affection for her child; she finds ever new joy in looking on her beloved child, day and night. The combined love of countless such mothers cannot be compared even to a drop of the boundless and incomprehensible ocean of motherly affection which lies enclosed in the heart of the Lord. With such a heart the Lord keeps on looking on His loving devotees of the type mentioned above, and every movement and gesture of such devotees fills Him with infinite joy. The sum total of the various types of joy that the whole world has been deriving from time without beginning cannot be compared even to a drop of the infinite ocean of joy that the Lord represents. Though embodying such a boundless ocean of infinite joy, the Lord continues to derive joy from the very sight of the movements and activities of the devotee whose mind and intellect are focussed on Him through love ! The Lord does not find adequate words to praise such a devotee ! The devotee belongs to Him and is the Lord's very own. Who can be dearer to the Lord than the devotee ? He alone who is dearest to the Lord is the best of all; it is, therefore, but natural that the Lord considers him to be the best devotee and the best Yogī.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे आत्मसंयमयोगो
नाम षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥ ६ ॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the sixth chapter entitled 'The Yoga of Self-Control'.

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter VII

The eighteen chapters of the Gītā have been divided into three groups of six chapters each, dealing with Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Jñānayoga respectively. This, however, does not mean that the groups exclusively deal with only one type of Yoga, and contain no reference to the other two types. A group is generally named after the type of Yoga which has been primarily dealt with in it. The first chapter of the first of these groups is only of an introductory nature containing no reference to any of the Yogas. Chapter II deals with Sāṅkhyayoga (Jñānayoga) from verses 11 to 30. After that from verse 39 to the end of Chapter III, Karmayoga has been discussed in detail. In Chapters IV and V the topics of Karmayoga and Jñānayoga have been promiscuously dealt with. The main theme of Chapter VI is Dhyānayoga, though Karmayoga and other Yogas too have been discussed here and there according to the needs of the occasion. Thus though all the principal Yogas have been discussed in this first group of six chapters, the subject of Karmayoga has been dealt with more elaborately in this than in the other two groups. Hence this group may be recognized as primarily dealing with Karmayoga.

Division of the Gītā into three groups of six chapters each

All the chapters of the intermediate group *viz.*, Chapters VII to XII, mainly and elaborately deal with Bhaktiyoga, although other subjects too have been incidentally discussed here and there. It is, therefore, quite in the fitness of things to regard this second group as dealing primarily with Bhaktiyoga.

Chapters XIII and XIV, forming part of the last group of six chapters, evidently deal with Jñānayoga. Chapter XV discusses Bhaktiyoga; Chapter XVI contains an exposition of the godly and demoniac properties; Chapter XVII classifies types of faith, food and sacrifice, charity; askesis etc., while Chapter XVIII, being the concluding chapter of the Gītā, discusses all the three Yogas of Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna and finally the teaching of the Bhagavad-Gītā culminates in Bhaktiyoga with an emphasis on surrender to God. Notwithstanding all this, it cannot be gainsaid that the discussion of Jñānayoga in this last group exceeds in volume the discussion of this subject in the first and second groups. Hence this group may be described as primarily dealing with Jñānayoga.

'Jñāna' means consummate knowledge of the formless and attributeless aspect of God with the secret of Its glory and greatness; while 'Vijñāna' means a thorough knowledge of the sports, mysteries, glory and greatness etc., of the qualified aspect of God both with and without form. Knowledge of God which comprises both 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' represents the knowledge of the integral Divinity. The present chapter deals with this integral Divinity as well as with the practices which lead to Its knowledge and the qualified souls possessing such knowledge. It is therefore that the chapter has been named as "The Yoga of Jñāna and Vijñāna."

Title of the Chapter

Summary of the Chapter

In the first verse of this chapter the Lord asks Arjuna to hear a discussion of the integral Divinity. In the second He promises to speak of Jñāna and Vijñāna and praises them; whereas verse 3 shows the difficulty of knowing the truth relating to God. In the fourth and the fifth He describes the two Prakṛtis or Natures—the higher as well as the lower, and in the sixth He declares this twofold Prakṛti to be the womb of all beings, and Himself to be the ultimate Cause of the entire creation. In the seventh He declares the whole universe to be His own manifestation, and illustrates the fact of His pervading all as their essence by the analogy of a string of yarn-beads; and the same point is elaborated in verses 8 to 12. Pointing out in the thirteenth why people fail to know God in reality, in the fourteenth He declares His Māyā to be extremely difficult to get over and points out the way to cross it. Showing in verse 15 how sinful men of a deluded intellect fail to worship God, He speaks of the four types of His virtuous devotees in the sixteenth. Declaring the superiority of the enlightened devotee in the seventeenth, in the eighteenth He pronounces all the types of devotees as noble, and the man of wisdom as His own self. The nineteenth shows the rarity of the enlightened devotee. Speaking of the worshippers of other deities in the twentieth, He shows in the twenty-first how He stabilizes their faith in those very deities and indicates the fruit of such worship in the twenty-second. Declaring in the twenty-third the fruit of the worship of other deities to be perishable, He shows how those who adore Him attain the supreme reward in the shape of his own realization. Giving reasons in twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth why ignorant folk fail to obtain all insight into His virtues, glory and reality, in the twenty-sixth He declares that while He knows all beings, none knows Him. Pointing out the reason of this ignorance in the twenty-seventh, He describes in the twenty-eighth the marks of devotees who worship Him with a firm resolve and exclusive devotion. The chapter is concluded by glorifying the knowledge of His integral being in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth.

Link of the Chapter

In the last verse of Chapter VI, the Lord declared that in His opinion the Yogī who devoutly and lovingly worshipped Him with his mind focussed on Him was the best of all. But so long as a man does not know the reality, virtues and glory of the Lord it is exceedingly difficult for him to perform such worship unceasingly with the mind; and at the same time it is essential to know the mode of such worship. Therefore, with a view to describing His integral reality, along with His virtues and glory, as well as the practice of devotion with its various processes, the Lord now introduces Chapter VII and asking Arjuna first of all to listen to it carefully, promises to speak of Jñāna and Vijñāna in the next verse.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः।
असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु॥ १॥

पार्थ O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; मयि आसक्तमनाः with (your) mind attached to Me (through exclusive love); मदाश्रयः with Me as your sole refuge; योगम् Yoga; युञ्जन् practising; यथा how; समग्रम् in entirety (with all My splendour, strength and majesty etc.); माम् Me (the Self of all); असंशयम् without any shadow of doubt; ज्ञास्यसि you will know; तत् that; शृणु hear.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, now listen how with the mind attached to Me (through exclusive love) and practising Yoga with absolute dependence of Me, you will know Me (the Repository of all power, strength and glory and other attributes, the Universal Soul) in entirety and without any shadow of doubt. (1)

"Mayyāsaktamanāḥ" has been used by the Lord for him whose mind is entirely free from attachment for all forms of enjoyment of this world and the next, and withdrawing itself from all sides has got so deeply attached to God, the sole object of supreme Love and the Repository of all virtues, that just as the fish cannot live without water even for an instant he cannot bear even a moment's separation from the Lord nor can he tolerate His slipping out of his memory even for a moment.

Even so he who has totally given up dependence on all objects of the world, and renouncing all forms of worldly hope and reliance has pinned his faith on God alone, and who knowing the almighty Lord to be his great asylum and supreme goal has thrown his whole responsibility on Him alone and become free from anxiety for ever, is referred to by the Lord as "Madāśrayaḥ".

The subject of discussion in the present chapter is Bhaktiyoga, or the Yoga of Devotion. Therefore, practice of Yoga referred to here means practice of perpetual and constant remembrance of God with faith and devotion, fixing the mind and intellect stably on Him.

God cannot be defined or circumscribed. He permeates the countless millions of universes, and they are all His manifestations. Whatever exists in these universes or beyond them rests in Him, He is eternal, true and ancient. He is the repository of all virtues, omnipotent, omniscient, all-pervading, all-sustaining and all-formed and takes the shape of this world of His own accord through His Yogamāyā. In reality, there is nothing apart from Him; the manifest and the unmanifest, the qualified and the unqualified, everything is He. Knowing His reality thus without the least doubt or misconception is what is meant by knowing Him in entirety and without any shadow of doubt.

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः।
यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते॥ २॥

अहम् I; ते to you; इदम् this; सविज्ञानम् coupled with Vijñāna or Knowledge of the qualified aspect of God both with form and without form; ज्ञानम् Knowledge of God in His absolute formless aspect; अशेषतः in its entirety; वक्ष्यामि shall speak of; यत् which; ज्ञात्वा having known; इह here, in this world; भूयः again; अन्यत् anything else; ज्ञातव्यम् to be known; न not; अवशिष्यते remains.

I shall unfold to you in its entirety this wisdom (Knowledge of God in His absolute formless aspect) along with the Knowledge of the qualified aspect of God (both with form and without form), having known which nothing else remains yet to be known in this world. (2)

Whatever has been taught in this chapter is conducive to the attainment of 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' as explained above. Therefore, just as in Chapter XIII the virtues leading to Jñāna have been termed as 'Jñāna' itself, even so the whole of this chapter should be

treated as identical with Jñāna and Vijñāna, inasmuch as it is replete with the teaching of Jñāna, Vijñāna.

'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' lead to a proper realization of the integral being of God. This entire universe is nothing but an insignificant part of that integral being. For him who has known this integral reality of God, naturally there remains nothing to be known. In the concluding verse of Chapter X, the Lord Himself says: "What use of your knowing all this multiplicity, Arjuna? Know only this much that I stand holding this entire universe by a spark of My glory."

Promising thus to speak of 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna', the Lord proceeds in the next verse to demonstrate the rarity of true knowledge of His integral being:—

मनुष्याणां सहस्त्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः॥ ३॥

मनुष्याणाम् of men; **सहस्त्रेषु** among thousands; **कश्चित्** hardly one; **सिद्धये** for perfection (in the shape of God-realization); **यतति** strives; **यतताम् सिद्धानाम्** of those striving Yogīs; **अपि** again; **कश्चित्** some rare one; **माम्** Me; **तत्त्वतः** in reality; **वेत्ति** knows.

Hardly one among thousands of men strives to realize Me; of those striving Yogīs, again, some rare one (devoting himself exclusively to Me) knows Me in reality. (3)

The use of the word 'Manuṣyāṇām' in this verse indicates, firstly, that birth in the human species is exceedingly difficult to attain. It is obtained through the exceptional grace of God; for everyone belonging to this species is qualified by virtue of one's birth to strive for God-realization. Differences of nationality, caste, Āśrama (stage in life) or country constitute no bar to one's striving for this end. Secondly it suggests that freedom of will is denied to all except the human species: hence creatures belonging to the other species cannot strive for God-realization. As for sub-human creatures such as birds, beasts, insects and reptiles, they possess neither the power nor the capacity to strive for this end. And beings higher than man such as gods etc., even though they possess the power, cannot strive for God-realization on account of super-abundance of enjoyments and lack of qualification in particular. If anyone belonging to the sub-human species or to the ethereal regions ever comes to realize God, it should be attributed to the special grace either of God Himself or of a God-realized saint.

Though blessed with human birth as a fruit of divine grace, the vast majority of men do not even turn their face towards the path of God-realization due to excessive attachment to enjoyments occasioned by the latencies of their past lives, and through want of deficiency of faith in and love for God. Scarce one among thousands, whose latencies of previous births are favourable, and who possesses some amount of faith in and reverence for God, holy men and the scriptures and comes in contact with saints, due to the store of one's past merits and through the special grace of God, takes to this path and strives for God-realization.

Again, of those who strive for God-realization, the Sādhanā or practice of all does not attain to the same level owing to differences in the latencies of their past lives, as well as in the intensity of their faith, devotion, association with saints and effort. Obstacles of various kinds also continue

to come in their way in the shape of egotism, mineness, desire, attachment and evil association etc. Therefore, there are very few persons whose faith, devotion and Sādhanā attain a degree of perfection and who as the result of such perfection are able to realize God in that very life.

The use of the adjective 'Siddhānām' with reference to the striving souls should be understood to indicate that in comparison with sensual men weltering in the morass of worldly enjoyments those who strive for perfection in the shape of God-realization are as good as 'perfect'.

Up to this point the Lord promised to speak of 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' and extolled them. Now, while introducing the subject, He first reveals the character of His higher and lower Natures:—

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च।
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा॥ ४॥
अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम्।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत्॥ ५॥

भूमिः earth; आपः water; अनलः fire; वायुः air; खम् ether; मनः mind; बुद्धिः reason; च and; अहङ्कारः ego; एव also; इति so; इयम् this (is); मे My; अष्टधा भिन्ना eightfold divided; प्रकृतिः Nature; इयम् this one (of eightfold composition); तु (is) indeed; अपरा (My) lower (nature); महाबाहो O mighty-armed Arjuna; इतः than this; अन्याम् the other; यया by which; इदम् this (entire); जगत् universe; धार्यते is sustained; मे My; जीवभूताम् constituting the life-principle; पराम् higher (conscious); प्रकृतिम् nature; विद्धि know.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and also ego; these constitute My nature eightfold divided. This indeed is My lower (material) nature; the other than this, by which the whole universe is sustained, know it to be My higher (or spiritual) nature in the form of Jīva (the life-principle), O Arjuna. (4,5)

The earth, water, fire, air and ether referred to in this verse denote the five subtle elements, which are the causes of the five gross elements as well as of the five objects of the senses, *viz.*, sound, etc., and which have been called Tanmātrās in the Sāṅkhya and Yoga terminology.

Mind, intellect and ego are the three aspects or phases of mind or the internal sense; hence they should be understood to mean the 'cosmic Mind.'

In verse 5 of Chapter XIII, the evolutes of Primordial Matter have been enumerated as 23 in number. But the five objects of senses, *viz.*, 'sound' etc., being the evolutes of the five subtle elements, and the ten organs (of perception and action) being the evolutes of the mind, those fifteen are covered by the above eight categories. Therefore, it is just the same to speak of matter as consisting of eight divisions or twentythree. The 'Aparā' Prakṛti, being objective and material in nature, is altogether different from and lower than the 'Parā' Prakṛti, or the subjective conscious life-principle. It is this Prakṛti which is the cause of the world and by which the Jīva gets bound. That is why it is termed as 'Aparā', or lower.

The Jīvātmā or individual soul is beyond all distinction of sex. In order to bring out this fact, the same life-principle or

consciousness has been referred to now in the masculine gender as 'Puruṣa', (XV.16) and 'Kṣetrajña' or 'Knower of the Field' (XIII.1), and now in the neuter gender as 'Adhyātma' (VII.29; VIII.3). It is that very principle which has been spoken of here in the feminine gender as 'Parā Prakṛti' or the Higher nature.

The whole of this objective world has been referred to in this verse by the term 'Jagat', or universe. The conscious Jīvātmā or individual soul sustains this universe. The whole range of objective reality rests on the subject, and all that is knowable is dependent on the knower. The object is not capable of sustaining the subject, nor is the knowable capable of sustaining the knower. The objective world of matter cannot exist unless it is sustained by the 'Parā Prakṛti' or Higher Nature of the Lord in the form of the conscious individual soul.

Delineating thus the character of the higher and lower natures, Parā and Aparā Prakṛtis, of God the Lord now shows that they are the cause of the entire creation, and that He Himself is the Supreme Cause of the universe, which is a combination of the two Prakṛtis.

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय।
अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा॥ ६॥

सर्वाणि all; भूतानि beings; एतद्योनीनि have evolved from this twofold Prakṛti; अहम् (and) I; कृत्स्नस्य जगतः of the entire creation; प्रभवः (am) the source; तथा as well as; प्रलयः the end; इति this; उपधारय know.

Arjuna, know that all beings have evolved from this twofold Prakṛti, and that I am the source of the entire creation, and into Me again it disappears. (6)

The word 'Bhūtāni' in this context stands for the various orders of living beings in the universe, high and low, animate as well as inanimate. All living beings owe their origin existence and growth to the combination of these two Prakṛtis. Therefore, these two are the cause of their manifestation. This very fact has been reiterated in verse 26 of Chapter XIII substituting the words 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' for the 'Aparā' and the 'Parā' Prakṛti respectively.

The word 'Jagat' stands for the entire universe consisting of sentient and insentient creation. Just as the cloud springs from the atmosphere, stays in the atmosphere and gets dissolved in the atmosphere, or in other words, the atmosphere is its sole cause and support, even so the whole universe springs from God, stays in God and finally disappears into God, or in other words, God is its sole, supreme cause and ultimate support. This very point has been elucidated in verses 4, 5 and 6 of Chapter IX as well. It should, however, be remembered in this connection that God is not material or subject to change like the atmosphere. An analogy is only meant to hint at a truth. Really speaking, God's manifestation in the form of this universe is nothing but a charming sport of His.

Thus, when God Himself is the sole cause and ultimate support of the entire creation, it naturally follows that it is a manifestation of God and is pervaded by God. Now, in order to elucidate this very point, the Lord says:—

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव॥ ७॥

धनञ्जय O Arjuna (lit., a conqueror of riches); मत्तः परतरम् besides Me; किञ्चित् anything; अन्यत् else; न not; अस्ति (there) is; इदम् सर्वम् all this (universe); सूत्रे on a thread; मणिगणाः इव as clusters of yarn-beads; मयि on Me; प्रोतम् is threaded.

There is nothing else besides Me, Arjuna. Like clusters of yarn-beads formed by knots on a thread, all this is threaded on Me. (7)

It may be contended here that whereas in the foregoing verse the Lord declared Himself to be the cause and support of this universe, He denies the existence, in this verse, of any thing other than Him, which shows the identity of the universe with God. Although these two statements appear as mutually contradictory, there is no real contradiction between them. Just as the vast expanse of ether is the cause and support of the cloud, which again is the same as ether inasmuch as it has no existence apart from its cause, even so God being the cause and support of the universe, the universe is but a manifestation of God, and nothing else than God. Therefore, both the statements referred to above are correct.

It is customary in India to make a rosary of yarn-beads by forming successive knots on a thread, and treating such knots as so many beads. Now just as yarn and yarn alone is present in the thread as well as in the knots formed thereon, even so the whole of this creation is threaded on God. That is to say, God alone permeates all. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the second half of the verse.

By the illustration of yarn and yarn-beads, the Lord demonstrated that it is He who has taken all forms and it is He again who pervades all. Now, in order to elucidate this very point, He mentions in the next four verses all those principal entities by which this universe is sustained and declares that it is He who permeates them all as their very essence.

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः।
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु॥ ८॥

कौन्तेय O sun of Kuntī, Arjuna; अहम् I (am); अप्सु in water; रसः the sapidity; शशिसूर्ययोः in the moon and the sun; प्रभा the light; अस्मि am; सर्ववेदेषु of all the Vedas; प्रणवः (the sacred syllable) OM; खे in ether; शब्दः the sound; नृषु (and) in men; पौरुषम् the manliness.

Arjuna, I am the sapidity in water and the light in the moon and the sun; I am the sacred syllable OM in all the Vedas, the sound in ether, and the manliness in men. (8)

The principle which constitutes the support of a thing, and pervades it, that principle alone is the life and being of that object, and that alone is declared to be its essence. The Lord accordingly says that He is the essence of water in the form of sapidity, He is the essence of the moon and the sun in the shape of their light; He is the sacred syllable OM, which is the sum and substance of the Vedas ! He is the principle of sound, which constitutes the essence of ether, and again He is the principle of manliness, which constitutes the essence of man.

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ।
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु॥ ९॥

पृथिव्याम् in the earth; पुण्यः गन्धः (I am) pure odour; च and; विभावसौ in fire; तेजः (pure) brilliance; अस्मि (I) am; च and; सर्वभूतेषु in all beings; जीवनम् (their) life; च and; तपस्विषु in men of askesis; तपः austerity; अस्मि am.

I am the pure odour (the subtle principle of odour) in the earth and the brilliance in fire; nay, I am the life in all beings and the austerity in men of askesis. (9)

Following the line of thought in the preceding verse, the Lord shows in this verse that it is He who pervades and sustains the earth, fire, the living beings as well as the men of austere penance as their very essence in the form of odour, brilliance, the life-principle and askesis respectively.

The use of the adjective 'Puṇyaḥ' with the word 'Gandhaḥ' is intended to show that 'odour' here does not mean the object of the olfactory sense, but the subtle principle of odour (Gandha-Tanmātrā,) which is the origin of the earth. Even so sapidity and sound too should be understood to refer to the corresponding Tanmātrās which constitute the causes of the elements of water and ether respectively and not to the objects of the senses of taste and hearing. The word 'Sarvabhūteṣu' stands for all living beings, both animate and inanimate, and 'life' stands for the principle of vitality, which sustains all living beings and distinguishes them from lifeless objects.

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम्।
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम्॥ १०॥

पार्थ O sun of Pṛthā Arjuna; सर्वभूतानाम् of all beings; सनातनम् बीजम् the eternal seed; माम् Me (alone); विद्धि know; अहम् I; बुद्धिमताम् of the intelligent; बुद्धिः the intelligence; तेजस्विनाम् (and) of the glorious; तेजः the glory; अस्मि am.

Arjuna, know Me the eternal seed of all beings. I am the intelligence of the intelligent; the glory of the glorious am I. (10)

The word 'Sanātana' means that which has existed for ever and will never perish. God alone is the ultimate substratum of the whole creation, both animate and inanimate, and everything originates from Him. It is, therefore, quite in the fitness of things that He should declare Himself to be the 'eternal seed' of the entire creation. In IX.18 the Lord calls Himself the 'imperishable seed', and again in X.39 He refers to Himself as "the seed of all beings". An ordinary material seed is neither without beginning nor imperishable. God alone is such a seed. Hence the Lord calls himself the 'eternal seed'.

The pure cognitive faculty which ascertains all objects and which controls and regulates the mind and senses is called Buddhi (the intellect). He whose cognitive faculty is highly developed is referred to as a man of intelligence. This cognitive faculty being a part of the Aparā Prakṛti', or lower Nature of God, the Lord says that He is the reasoning faculty which is the essential feature of the intelligent. Even so Tejas, or

glory, stands for the power of influencing others. A person possessing this power in abundance is called 'glorious'. This power also being a part of the 'Aparā Prakṛti' of God, the Lord speaks of both these powers as the same as Himself.

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम्।
धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ॥ ११॥

भरतर्षभ O best among Bharatas; अहम् I (am); बलवताम् of the mighty; कामरागविवर्जितम् free from passion and desire; बलम् the might; च and; भूतेषु in beings; धर्माविरुद्धः not conflicting with virtue or scriptural injunctions; कामः (sexual) desire; अस्मि (I) am.

Arjuna, of the mighty I am the might, free from passion and desire; in beings I am the sexual desire not conflicting with virtue or scriptural injunctions. (11)

The might which is accompanied with desire, passion, egoism and anger etc., is the demoniacal type of might referred to in XVI.18 and the renunciation of which has been stressed in XVIII.53. Even so sexual desire which runs counter to virtue, being a principal element of the demoniacal nature, is the root of all evils (III.37), a gate to hell and worth giving up (XVI.21). The might and desire which are of a different type from those referred to above, i.e., irreproachable might and a pure desire alone are worth possessing.

By addressing Arjuna as the best among the Bharatas, the Lord indicated that Arjuna, being descended from Bharata, possessed neither the demoniac type of might, nor the foul and impious type of desire. He was possessed of a might which was free from desire and passion and of a sexual desire which was in consonance with righteousness. The Lord speaks of such might and such desire as His own manifestation.

Thus declaring Himself to be present in all important things as their very essence the Lord indirectly proved that He was all-pervasive and all-formed. He now winds up the topic by calling Himself the root cause of the entire creation, which is an evolute of the three modes of Prakṛti:—

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये।
मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि॥ १२॥

च and; ये एव whichever; सात्त्विकाः born of Sattva (the quality of goodness); भावाः entities (there are); च and; ये (those) that; राजसाः born of Rajas (the principle of activity); तामसाः (and) born of Tamas (the principle of inertia); तान् them (all); मत्तः from Me; एव alone; इति thus; विद्धि know; तु but (in reality); तेषु in them; अहम् I; ते (and) they; मयि in Me; न (are) not.

Whatever other entities there are, born of Sattva (the quality of goodness), and those that are born of Rajas (the principle of activity) and Tamas (the principle of inertia), know them all as evolved from Me alone. In reality, however, neither do I exist in them, nor they in Me. (12)

Mind, intellect, ego, the senses, the objects of senses, the Tanmātrās (subtle states of the five elements), the five elements, all good and evil qualities and actions, and

whatever other entities there are, they are all included in entities born of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. All these entities evolve and develop from the 'Aparā Prakṛti' or lower nature of God. And to know that this Prakṛti belongs to God, who alone is her ultimate substratum, and that it is under His sportive direction that she carries on her functions of creating, multiplying and dissolving everything, is what is meant by knowing them as evolved from God.

To take a familiar illustration, though the atmosphere is the support of the cloud appearing therein, it remains absolutely uncontaminated by the cloud. The cloud is not always present in the atmosphere; and being fleeting by nature it has, as a matter of fact, no abiding reality either. But the atmosphere exists even when there is no cloud; even where there is no cloud, the atmosphere is there nonetheless; its existence is not dependent on the existence of the cloud. In reality, the cloud itself is not something different from the atmosphere, it appears as arising in and from the atmosphere. Accordingly, inasmuch as the cloud has no separate existence as a matter of fact, the atmosphere is at no time in the cloud, and ever exists in its own being, Even so, though God is the cause and substratum of all the evolutes of the three modes of Prakṛti, in reality they do not exist in him, nor He in them. He is always and in every state beyond the Guṇas or modes of Nature, and He ever exists in His own Being. That is why he says, "Neither do I exist in them, nor they in Me." For further elucidation of this point the reader is referred to verses 4 and 5 of Chapter IX.

The Lord has thus far shown that the whole world is His own manifestation and is pervaded by Him. Here, then, the question arises: Why do people fail to recognize God though He is thus present everywhere and is so near to them? In reply to this, the Lord says:—

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत्।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम्॥ १३॥

गुणमयैः evolved from the three modes of Nature; त्रिभिः three kinds of; एभिः these; भावैः by entities; इदम् this; सर्वम् entire; जगत् creation; मोहितम् (is) deluded; एभ्यः from these; परम् (standing) apart; माम् Me; अव्ययम् the imperishable Being; न not; अभिजानाति recognizes.

The whole of this creation is deluded by these objects evolved from the three modes of Prakṛti—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; that is why the world fails to recognize Me, standing apart from these and imperishable. (13)

The objects by which the world is herein said to be deluded are the same as described in the preceding verse. The adjectives 'Tribhiḥ' and 'Guṇamayaiḥ' are intended to show that all the entities referred to here are of three kinds according, as they are evolved from the three Guṇas. And the word 'Jagat' refers to all animate creatures for the question of delusion hardly arises in the case of inanimate objects. Therefore, the statement of the Lord in this verse seems to indicate that all embodied creatures of the world, human beings not excepted, are, guided by their respective temperament, disposition and bent of mind and come to regard these objects, which are evolved from the three modes of Prakṛti and are transitory and full of sorrow, as eternal and a source

of joy, and deluded by the glamour of their supposed charm and blissful nature forget the supreme object of life. That is why they turn their face away from the thought and knowledge of the virtues, glory, truth, identity and mysteries of God and falling a prey to doubt and misconception show irreverence to God. Completely taken up as they are with the evolutes of the three Guṇas, their faculty of judgment has got so blunted that they fail to recognize any duty or goal of life other than the accumulation of objects and their enjoyment.

The reasoning faculty of these men deluded by worldly enjoyments does not reach beyond the perishable realm of the three Guṇas; hence they fail to recognize God, who is wholly above these and imperishable.

In XV.18 as well the Lord declares Himself as altogether beyond what He calls 'Kṣara' or perishable Matter. The same principle which is named as 'Kṣara' in that context has been termed here as 'Aparā Prakṛti' and 'objects evolved from the three Guṇas'. That which has been spoken of there as 'Akṣara Puruṣa', has been referred to as 'Parā Prakṛti' in this chapter; and what has been termed as 'Puruṣottama' there has been referred to as 'Mām' in the present context.

The Lord declared the world as deluded by the evolutes of the three Guṇas. This led Arjuna to enquire whether there existed any means of getting rid of this delusion. The All-merciful Lord, who is the inner Witness of all hearts, understood this. He, therefore, now indicates the means of getting over His Māyā pronouncing it as difficult to cross:—

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते॥ १४॥

हि because; एषा this; दैवी most wonderful; गुणमयी consisting of the three Guṇas; मम My; माया veil; दुरत्यया (is) difficult to break through; ये who; माम् Me; एव alone; प्रपद्यन्ते constantly adore; ते they; एताम् this; मायाम् veil; तरन्ति (are able to) cross.

For this most wonderful Māyā (veil) of Mine, consisting of the three Guṇas (modes of Nature), is extremely difficult to break through; those, however, who constantly adore Me alone are able to cross it. (14)

The word 'Eṣā', which is a demonstrative adjective, refers to something directly perceptible by the senses; and Prakṛti is perceptible only through her evolutes. This should be taken to mean that the same Prakṛti, which was referred to in the preceding verse in the form of her evolutes under the name of 'Guṇamayaiḥ' Bhāvaiḥ, (evolutes of the three Guṇas), has been mentioned here under the name of 'Māyā'. The Guṇas as well as their evolutes in the shape of this material and phenomenal world exist only in this Māyā; that is why it has been spoken of as consisting of the three Guṇas. This Māyā is not of an ordinary type like that employed by conjurers and demons; it is God's own most wonderful power. That is why it has been called Daivī (unearthly). And, finally, by calling it 'Mine' and extremely difficult to break through, the Lord indicates that He being the Lord of this Māyā, man cannot easily get over it without taking refuge in Him.

He who looks upon God alone as his supreme refuge, supreme resort, dearest object of love and supreme goal, and regarding everything as belonging to Him, or existing only for His purpose, has renounced the

sense of possession and attachment in respect of his body, wife, progeny, wealth, home and fame etc.; nay, who uses them all only as the means of worshipping the Lord and remains ever satisfied with whatever is ordained for him by God, nay, who is ever alert in carrying out the behest of God, and remaining constantly engaged in the remembrance of God keeps himself ever united with Him in every way, is regarded as constantly adoring God. This is what is known as exclusive surrender to God. It is only such devotees that are able to cross Māyā.

It is the 'Aparā Prakṛti' with its evolutes that is referred to here as 'Māyā'. He who having surrendered Himself to God, who is the Lord of Māyā, and thoroughly grasped through His grace the secret of this Māyā has been completely dissociated from it and has realized God, who is beyond Māyā, is said to have crossed the Māyā.

Showing thus the difficulty of getting over Māyā, the Lord declared His adoration as the means of crossing it. The question now arises: If such is the case, how is it that pepole do not constantly worship God? In reply to this, the Lord says:—

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः।
माययापहृतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः॥ १५॥

मायया अपहृतज्ञानाः those whose wisdom has been carried away by Māyā; आसुरम् demoniac; भावम् nature; आश्रिताः having embraced; नराधमाः vile among men; दुष्कृतिनः of evil deeds; मूढाः fools; माम् Me; न not; प्रपद्यन्ते adore.

Those whose wisdom has been carried away by Māyā, and who have embraced the demoniac nature, such follish and vile men of evil deeds do not adore Me. (15)

The word 'Duṣkṛtinaḥ', here refers to those who have committed sins in their past lives and are deliberately engaged in committing sins in the current life too. Again, those who, far from knowing what is Prakṛti (Matter), what is Puruṣa or Spirit, what is God, and in what relation does the individual soul stand to God and vice versa, do not even know, nor care to know, that the object of human existence is to attain God and that man's primary duty is to adore Him, are referred to here as 'Mūḍhāḥ'. Even so there are men who are vile in thought and deed—who through excess of attachment for enjoyment, thoughtlessness and lethargy, are wont to dissipate their lives in enjoying the pleasures of the senses alone and are constantly engaged in the performance of low and reprehensible acts for obtaining such enjoyments. The word 'Narādhamāḥ' refers to this type of men. The expression 'Māyayāpahṛtajñānāḥ' denotes those whose judgment has been warped through height of perversity and irreverence and who, therefore, refusing to recognize the Vedas and other scriptures and noble teachings handed down by tradition from preceptor to disciple, and having no belief in God, the law of recompense and rebirth, remain entangled in the cobweb of fallacious and captious reasoning and unbelief and harm others. Men of a demoniac disposition who besides possessing the above attributes have embraced such demoniac propensities as hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, harshness, lust, anger, greed, infatuation etc., never adore God.

The preceding verse stated that sinful men possessed of the demoniac nature do not worship God. The question, therefore, arises: What type of men worship Him, then? In reply to this, the Lord says:—

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ॥ १६॥

भरतर्षभ O best among the Bharatas; अर्जुन O Arjuna; सुकृतिनः of noble deeds; अर्थार्थी The seeker after worldly possessions; आर्तः the afflicted; जिज्ञासुः the seeker for knowledge; च and; ज्ञानी The man of wisdom; चतुर्विधाः जनाः (these) four types of devotees; माम् Me; भजन्ते worship.

Four types of devotees of noble deeds worship Me, Arjuna, the seeker after worldly possessions, the afflicted, the seeker for knowledge, and man of wisdom, O best of Bharatas. (16)

The word 'Sukṛtinaḥ' in this verse refers to those who have by performing virtuous acts through successive lives reformed their nature and got habituated to noble deeds, and who under the impulse of past tendencies or through the influence of holy association perform only noble deeds as enjoined by the Lord in the current life too. Virtuous acts lead to a knowledge of the glory and greatness of God and promote faith in Him; and faith is conducive to the practice of Bhajana (adoration of God). This shows that the adjective 'Sukṛtinaḥ' qualifies all the four types of devotees referred to in the verse. In other words, all devotees who adore God with faith are invariably 'virtuous', whatever the motive of their worship.

A devotee of the 'Arthārthī' type is he who cherishes in his heart the craving for one or more enjoyments of this world or the next, such as the possession of a wife, progeny, wealth, honour, eminence, fame and heavenly bliss etc., but who depends on God and God alone for the satisfaction of his desire, and practises adoration with reverence and faith for such satisfaction.

Devotees like Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa are recognized as belonging to this class, and the name of Dhruva is cited as the foremost among them. Uttānapāda, the elder son of Svāyambhuva Manu, had two consorts, Sunīti and Suruci by name. Sunīti gave birth to Dhruva, and Suruci to Uttama. The king was particularly fond of his second wife, Suruci. One day, while child Dhruva sought the lap of his father, he was snubbed by Suruci, who tore him away saying, "You are an unlucky chap, having taken birth from the womb of Sunīti. Had you been intended for sharing the royal throne, you would have been born of me. Therefore, go and take to the worship of Śrī Hari; then alone will you gain the object of your desire". The insulting behaviour of the stepmother cut the boy to the quick; with tears in his eyes, he ran to his mother Sunīti and related the whole incident to her. Sunīti said, "Dear child ! The remarks of mother Suruci are quite true. Without adoring God, you will not attain the object of your desire." Hearing the words of his mother, the boy immediately left his home in order to practise adoration with the motive of gaining the kingdom. The sage Nārada med the boy on the way and tried to persuade him to return. He even told the boy that he would get the kingdom for him; but the boy did not swerve from his resolve. The sage then imparted to the boy the sacred formula 'Om Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya' (obeisance to Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu), taught him how to meditate on the four-armed figure of the Lord, and blessed him. Retiring

to the forest of Madhuvana stretching along the bank of the Jamunā, the boy started his austerities. Horrors and temptation of various kinds came up before him to deter him from his purpose; but nothing could shake his resolution. At last, pleased with his devotion, the Lord revealed Himself before the boy. Receiving the news from Devarṣi Nārada, King Uttānapāda, accompanied by his younger son Uttama and the two queens, proceeded to the forest to bring his boy back. They met Dhruva on the way. He looked the very embodiment of austerity. Alighting from his elephant, the king picked up the child and hugged him to his bosom. He brought him back to his capital with great pomp and festivity. At last, handing over the kingdom to Dhruva, the king adopted the life of austere penance (Vānaprastha) and repaired to the forest.

A devotee of the 'Ārta' type is he who practises worship of God with absolute faith and unflinching devotion for the alleviation of physical or mental agony; or with a view to securing relief from adversity, fear of enemies, ailment, ignominy, or the fear of being attacked by thieves, dacoits, desperadoes or beasts of prey, getting unnerved by such fear.

The famous elephant of the Puranic legend, the captive kings in the court of Jarāsandha and many others belong to this class of devotees; but the name of Draupadī, the devoted and faithful consort of the Pāṇḍavas, is cited as the foremost devotee of this class.

Daughter of King Drupada, Draupadī rose from the sacrificial altar. Having a beautiful swarthy complexion, she was also called by the name of Kṛṣṇā. Draupadī had infinite virtues; she was an extremely devoted and faithful wife, an ideal housewife, and a true devotee of God. She knew Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the fullest manifestation of Divinity,—as God Himself, the embodiment to Truth, Knowledge and Bliss; and the Lord too for His part never concealed from her even His most secret pastimes. She was even aware of the transcendent sports connected with the pure Divine Love that manifested itself in the cowherd damsels of Brindāvana, and which were not known even to the husbands and children of the blessed Gopīs. It was therefore that while being stripped of her garment by the Kauravas she addressed Him as the 'Beloved of the Gopīs'.

Under instructions from Duryodhana, wicked Duḥśāsana dragged her to the Kaurava Court and began to strip her off her only saree on her person to denude her and finding no indication of succour from any quarter and feeling altogether helpless Draupadī thought of the divine Śrī Kṛṣṇa, her supreme supporter and greatest friend. She had the firm conviction in her heart that the Lord would surely appear as soon as she remembered Him; for it would be impossible for Him to resist her plaintive cries. She addressed the following appeal to the Lord:—

"O Govinda, the Protector of cows ! O Resident of Dvārakā ! O Kṛṣṇa, Beloved of the Gopīs ! O Keśava ! Is it unknown to You that I am being humiliated by the Kauravas ? O Master ! O Lord of Lakṣmī, goddess of prosperity, O King of Vraja ! O Allayer of suffering ! O Janārdana, save me from floundering in the ocean of the Kaurava's, tyranny ! O Kṛṣṇa ! O Attracter of Souls ! O great Yogī ! O Universal soul ! O Creator of the universe ! O Govinda ! Protect this languishing suppliant creature fallen into the clutches of the Kauravas !"*

* गोविन्द द्वारकावासिन् कृष्ण गोपीजनप्रिय। कौरवैः परिभूतां मां किं न जानासि केशव॥
हे नाथ हे रमानाथ व्रजनाथार्तिनाशन। कौरवार्णवमग्नां मामुद्धरस्व जनार्दन॥
कृष्ण कृष्ण महायोगिन् विश्वात्मन् विश्वभावन। प्रपन्नां पाहि गोविन्द कुरुमध्येऽवसीदतीम्॥

(Mahābhārata, Sabhāparva 67)

This plaintive appeal from Draupadī melted the heart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the universe. Overwhelmed with compassion and leaving the bed on which He lay at Dvārakā, the All-merciful Lord ran to save her.*

The Lord appeared in the guise of cloth in that devilish court of the Kauravas ! Saris of various colours and designs began to emerge one after another from the one which Draupadī had on her person as Duḥśāsana snatched at them in his attempt to denude her. Heaps of Saris were piled up in the royal court ! Draupadī's dearest friend came to her rescue in the very nick of time and saved her honour ! Duḥśāsana sank to the ground exhausted.

A devotee of the 'Jijñāsu' type is he who practises devotion to the Lord with the sole motive of knowing God in reality (XIV.26), caring not for wealth, women, progeny, house and other objects and unmindful of disease and danger.

Among devotees of this class, the names of Parīkṣit and many others are mentioned; but the name of Uddhava is the best known of them all. Chapters VII to XXX of Book XI of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* embody the divine teachings of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava, which are popularly known by the name of *Uddhava-Gītā*.

A devotee of the 'Jñānī' type is he who has realized God, in whose eyes God alone remains as the abiding reality,—there is nothing else than God,—and whose desires have altogether ceased as a result of that realization, and who therefore worships God under the natural impulse of his heart.

Śrī Śukadeva, Sanaka and his three brothers, Devarṣi Nārada, Bhīṣma and others are well-known figures belonging to this category. Prahlāda too was recognized as a devotee of this type even in his boyhood. He received spiritual instruction from Devarṣi Nārada, while he was yet in the womb of his mother. He was sprung from the loins of the demon king Hiraṇyakaśipu. Hiraṇyakaśipu hated Śrī Hari, while Prahlāda was a great devotee of the Lord. Therefore, Hiraṇyakaśipu subjected him to hard persecution. He caused him to be bitten by poisonous snakes, trampled under the feet of elephants, hurled from palace-tops, thrown into the sea and offered to fire. His teachers also tried to dispose of him. But on every such occasion the Lord came to his rescue. For his sake the Lord manifested Himself in the form of a man-lion and put an end to the bloody career or Hiraṇyakaśipu. Apart from fearlessness, which was a sure sign of Prahlāda's enlightenment, the sublime teaching that he imparted to his fellow students while receiving his schooling at the preceptor's house during his very childhood also proves his state of enlightenment. For the beautiful story of his life the reader is referred to the *Bhāgavata* and the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*.

The use of the indeclinable 'Ca' at the end of the verse is intended to distinguish the Jñānī from the other types of devotees and also to bring out his superiority over the rest. The glory of the Jñānī Bhakta discussed in verses 17, 18 and 19 below has been adumbrated by the use of this indeclinable.

Devotees who worship God in any form or shape with unflinching faith are all noble souls. It is therefore that the Lord refers to all the four types of devotees as 'virtuous' in this and 'noble' in the eighteenth verse. But if we assess the relative value of each type according to the spirit of this verse, it will appear that the 'Ārta' type of devotees is superior to the 'Arthārthī', and 'Jijñāsu' to the 'Ārta', the Jñānī being superior even to the 'Jijñāsu'. For the

* त्यक्त्वाशय्यासनं पद्भ्यां कृपालुः कृपयाभ्यगात्।

Arthārthī worships God for the sake of worldly enjoyments, taking them to be the source of happiness. He is not fully conversant with the glory of God; that is why he does not develop full love for God, and that is why he craves for enjoyments. A devotee of the 'Ārta' type asks nothing from God for the sake of enjoyment. Although this proves that he loves God more than the 'Arthārthī', his love is certainly shared to some extent by bodily comforts, honour, fame, etc. It is therefore that when faced with a grave danger or ignominy he cries out to God for protection against the same. A devotee of the 'Jijñāsu' type neither seeks pleasure or enjoyment nor loses his nerve in the face of worldly danger. His only interest lies in knowing the truth about God. This shows that although he has no attachment for worldly enjoyments, the craving for liberation nevertheless lingers in Him. Therefore, his love, though distinct from and higher than that of the 'Arthārthī', and the 'Ārta' types of devotees, is yet deficient as compared to the love of the 'Jñānī'. The 'Jñānī', however, who knows the truth of the integral Divinity, constantly and lovingly adores God as a matter course, without any other motive or interest. Therefore, he is the best of all.

Addressing Arjuna as the best among the Bharatas the Lord seeks to indicate that he was a 'virtuous' man, and was therefore already engaged in the practice of adoration.

Referring thus to the four types of devotees, the Lord now proceeds to praise the Divine Love possessed by the 'Jñānī', and establishes his superiority over the other types of devotees.

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः॥ १७॥

तेषाम् of these; नित्ययुक्तः ever established in Me; एकभक्तिः possessed of exclusive devotion; ज्ञानी the man of wisdom; विशिष्यते excels; हि for; ज्ञानिनः to the enlightened devotee (who knows Me in reality); अहम् I (am); अत्यर्थम् extremely; प्रियः dear; च and; सः he (the enlightened devotee); मम to Me; प्रियः (is) extremely dear.

Of these best is the man of wisdom, ever established in Me and possessed of exclusive devotion. For I am extremely dear to the wise man (who knows Me in reality), and he is extremely dear to Me. (17)

The word 'Nityayuktaḥ' refers to him who is ever and constantly established in God alone, having lost all consciousness of the world, of his own body, nay, of his very 'self'; and the word 'Ekabhaktiḥ' stands for him who cherishes motiveless and concentrated love for God alone. The man of wisdom, who knows the truth about God, has both these virtues fully developed in him; it is therefore that the two adjectives have been used with reference to him.

A devotee who has fully realized the truth and mysteries of God, who sees everything as God, and beholds Him everywhere and at every time, nay, in whose eyes nothing remains apart from God, and whose mind and intellect, having realized God as the sole and supreme Reality and the most beloved of all, are altogether freed from all attachments and desires, and are merged wholly in God,—who can measure the depth of love such a devotee cherishes for the Lord. He who has renounced for the sake of God all craving for the pleasures

and enjoyments of this world and the next, which are so dear and agreeable and extremely rare in the eyes of worldly minded men,—others cannot even imagine how dearly such a devotee loves the Lord and in what great esteem he holds Him. That is why the Lord says in this verse, "Extremely dear am I to the man of wisdom." And it goes without saying that he who holds God so dear should be extremely dear to God. For, in the first place, God Himself is an embodiment of Love by His very nature,* Nay, it is from a drop of that boundless ocean of nectarine love that the entire creation derives its joy. Secondly, it has been proclaimed by the Lord: "Howsoever men approach Me, even so do I seek them." What wonder, then, that God should bestow His utmost love on such a devotee ? It is therefore that He says: "Such a devotee is extremely dear to Me."

Showing the height and depth of love possessed by the God-realized devotee, who has full knowledge of the virtues, glory and reality of God, the present verse praises him as the best of all devotees.

The Lord declared the enlightened devotee as the best of all, and extremely dear to Him. One may ask here: Does this mean that the other types of devotees are not so good and dear to Him ? In reply to this, the Lord says:—

उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम्।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम्॥ १८॥

एते these; सर्वे all; एव verily; उदाराः (are) noble; ज्ञानी the man of wisdom; तु however; मे My; आत्मा self; एव indeed; मतम् (such is My) belief; हि for; युक्तात्मा having his mind and intellect merged in Me; सः he (the enlightened devotee); अनुत्तमाम् the highest; गतिम् goal; माम् (in) Me; एव alone; आस्थितः (is) firmly established.

Indeed all these are noble, but the man of wisdom is My very self: such is My view. For such a devotee, who has his mind and intellect merged in Me, is firmly established in Me alone, the highest goal. (18)

Among the four types of devotees referred to in this context, the man of wisdom being unquestionably the best, the other three, *viz.*, the 'Arthārthī', the 'Ārta' and the 'Jijñāsu' too, are devoted to the worship of God and possess firm and supreme faith in Him. They have definitely come to the conclusion that God is almighty, omniscient, the universal Lord, supremely compassionate and the greatest friend, and that their hopes and aspirations can be realized through Him and Him alone. Armed with this conviction and knowledge, they give up dependence on everything else and devote their life to practices such as the worship and remembrance, adoration and service of the Lord. They scrupulously refrain from doing anything which may weaken their faith in God even to the slightest degree. Their desires have not altogether ceased; but they seek their fulfilment from God and God alone. It is not unnatural for a devoted and faithful wife to want something for herself; but she would seek if from her beloved husband alone. She would not even cast a glance at another, much less rely on another, nor does she know anyone else. Even so the devotees referred to above

* रसो वै सः। रसꣳह्येवायं लब्ध्वाऽऽनन्दी भवति॥ *(Taittirīya Upaniṣad II.7)*
"God is love absolute; it is from this love that soul derives its joy".

depend on God and God alone. That is why the Lord calls them all as noble. It is therefore that He says in verse 23: "My devotees, howsoever they worship Me, in the end come to Me alone." Such is the fruit of devotion to God proclaimed in IX.25 as well.

The indeclinable 'Tu' is intended to differentiate the 'Jñānī' from the other types of devotees mentioned above. It shows that even though all of them are good and dear to the Lord, the man of wisdom excels them all.

By calling the Jñānī His own self, the Lord shows that there is no difference whatsoever between the man of wisdom and Himself. Such a devotee is the same as God, and God is the same as the devotee; there is absolute identity between the two.

Such a devotee ever remains constantly and unshakably fixed in God, regarding Him alone as the supreme and ultimate goal and the supreme refuge. This is what is meant by his being "firmly established in God, the highest goal."

Now, in order to show the rarity of such an enlightened devotee, the Lord says:—

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः॥ १९॥

बहूनाम् जन्मनाम् of a series of births; **अन्ते** in the very last; **ज्ञानवान्** the enlightened soul; **सर्वम्** all (this); **वासुदेवः** (is) God; **इति** thus; **माम्** Me; **प्रपद्यते** worships; **सः** that; **महात्मा** exalted soul; **सुदुर्लभः** (is) very rare.

In the very last of all births the enlightened soul worships Me, realizing that all this is God. Such a great soul is very rare. (19)

The very birth in which a man attains the rank of an enlightened devotee is the last of his many births. For having realized God in this way one is never born again. That constitutes his last birth.

One is apt to interpret the first half of this verse to mean that man attains the rank of an enlightened devotee only after practising devotion with an interested motive for successive births. Such an interpretation, however, would make it inevitable for devotees of the 'Arthārthī', 'Ārta' and 'Jiñāsu' types to go through many rounds of births. But such a view is negatived by a number of statements of the Lord in which He says that all types of His devotees attain Him (VII.23; IX.25); and nowhere in that connection does He lay it down as compulsory for them to go through a number of births. Of course, in the event of his practice being slack through deficiency of faith and love a devotee may have to go through many births; but if his faith and love are highly developed and his practice is intense, he can realize God in one single birth. Time is no determining factor here.

The word 'Jñāna' forming part of 'Jñānavān' refers to the same wisdom the attainment of which along with that of 'Vijñāna' has been praised in verse 2 of this chapter; and the word 'Jñānavān' refers to the loving devotee who has attained that knowledge, viz., the knowledge of Brahma without attributes, together with 'Vijñāna' or the knowledge of qualified Brahma with and without form, and of whom verse 3 says: "Some rare one knows Me in reality." It is for this reason that in verse 18 the Lord speaks of him as His very self.

The whole creation is a manifestation of God, and there is nothing apart from God: to perceive this truth directly once for

all, and to remain ever established in it is to worship Him realizing that "All this is God."

People in the world do not in the first place conceive a liking for the practice of adoration. If a rare one among thousands takes a fancy to it, his nature compels him to relax his efforts and therefore to give up the practice altogether. Even if a man puts forth a special effort, through deficiency of faith and devotion he continues to divert it towards the satisfaction of his desires, with the result that he too fails to realize God. This proves that God-realized souls are very rare in this world. Hence it is but reasonable to assume that exalted souls of the type referred to above are very difficult to get in this world.

If anyone comes in contact with such a noble soul, he should be regarded as exceptionally fortunate. Devarṣi Nārada says in this 'Aphorisms on Bhakti':—

महत्सङ्गस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च ॥ ३९ ॥

"Association with great souls is not only rare but hard to obtain, though unfailing in its effect."

In verse 15 it was stated that men of a demoniac disposition who are given to evil deeds do not worship God; while in verses 16 to 19 we were told that virtuous men worship God. The Lord now proceeds to speak of those who, though performing noble deeds, are yet swayed by desire and worship other gods according to the prompting of their own nature.

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ २० ॥

तैः तैः कामैः by various desires; **हृतज्ञानाः** having their wisdom carried away; **स्वया प्रकृत्या** by their own nature; **नियताः** prompted; **तम् तम् नियमम्** vows relating to each deity; **आस्थाय** undertaking; **अन्यदेवताः** other deities; **प्रपद्यन्ते** worship.

Those whose wisdom has been carried away by various desires, being prompted by their own nature, worship other deities adopting rules relating to each. **(20)**

The repetition of the word 'Taiḥ' in this verse shows that the desires of all persons are not of a uniform character. These desires of a heterogeneous character cloud the vision of man, who is at a loss to understand who he is, what is his duty, what is the relation between God and the individual soul, what is the purpose of human life and what is it that distinguishes human life from other lives, and fails to realize that his salvation lies in the practice of adoration, rather than in getting lost in enjoyments. This obscuration of judgment is what is meant by one's wisdom being carried away by various desires.

The worshippers of gods referred to in this verse should not be confused with those who have been spoken of as 'Māyayāpahṛtajñānāḥ' in verse 15 on account of the expression 'Hṛtajñānāḥ' used with reference to them. Those referred to in verse 15 have been characterized by the Lord as sinful, stupid, vile among men and possessed of a demoniac disposition. This shows that the element of Tamas is predominant in them; hence they are liable to damnation (XVI.16, 19). On the other hand, devotees who worship God and whose wisdom has been spoken of in the present verse as carried away by various forms of desires are endowed with faith and eligible for the celestial abode (VII.23; IX.25) and are

believed to possess a nature predominantly Sāttvika with a mixture of Rajas. Thus there is a world of difference between the two types of men described in the two verses.

Actions performed by an individual through successive births leave their impressions behind, which are stored in the mind. The sum-total of these impressions goes to constitute what is known as the nature of that individual. This is what is referred to here by the word 'Prakṛtyā'. Each individual possesses a distinctive nature of his or her own. The inclination that one feels in one's mind to worship different deities is what is meant by being prompted by that nature.

The deities referred to in this verse are the sun-god, the moon-god, the gods of fire, air, water and death, Indra, the Lord of paradise, and other gods mentioned in the scriptures. By rules relating to the worship of each are meant the various rules connected with Japa or muttering of the Mantra sacred to each deity, meditation, adoration, salutation, Nyāsa (assigning the component parts of a Mantra to the various limbs of one's body), Havana (pouring oblations into the sacred fire), vows and fasts, etc., forming part of such worship. The rules of worship etc., vary according to the desire actuating the mind of the worshipper, and the nature of the deity worshipped; that is why the word 'Tam' has been used twice in the verse.

There is one more point worth remembering in this connection. A man is said to worship some other deity only when he views the deity as apart from God, the supreme Deity. If, however, he worships the deity as no other than God and in accordance with His commands, either disinterestedly or with a view to pleasing God, he actually worships God Himself rather than any other deity, and the reward of such worship too is God-realization.

The next two verses tell us how and in what form are the worshippers of gods rewarded for their worship:—

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम्॥ २१॥

यः यः who so; भक्तः devotee (craving for some return); याम् याम् whatever; तनुम् (celestial) form; श्रद्धया with reverence; अर्चितुम् to worship; इच्छति seeks; तस्य तस्य of that particular devotee; अहम् I; ताम् एव in that very form; श्रद्धाम् faith; अचलाम् stable; विदधामि render.

Whatever celestial form a devotee (craving for some worldly object) chooses to worship with reverence, I stabilize the faith of that particular devotee in that very form. (21)

The use of the words 'Yaḥ' and 'Yām' twice in this verse is intended to bring out the diversity both of the devotees and the deities worshipped by them. This shows that there are various types of devotees with interested motives, and the deities they worship are also numerous varying according to the desire and temperament of those devotees.

The word 'Śraddhayā' in this verse implies unmitigated faith in the existence of divine intelligences, in their glory and virtues, and in the methods of their worship and its rewards. Endowed with such faith the worshipper instals with due ceremony an image made of metal or wood, clay or stone according to the pattern laid down in the scriptures, or a painting, or as an

alternative forms a mental picture, and offers worship with prescribed articles according to rules, repeating the Mantra sacred to that particular deity as many times as is laid down in the scriptures. The devotees should also perform sacrifice offering oblations to the sacred fire in the name of the deity, meditate on his or her form, adore the Sun, Moon, Fire and other gods whose physical forms are directly perceptible to the eyes, and offer them obeisance etc. This is what is meant by worshipping the gods with faith.

The demonstrative adjective 'Tām' occurring in the second half of this verse has been connected with 'Tanum' in the first half, instead of being taken to quality the noun 'Śraddhām' in the second half, which is more proximate to it, only because 'Tām' is a correlative of 'Yām' and these two always go together according to the rules of Saṁskṛta grammer (यत्तदोर्नित्यसम्बन्धः). Even if it is taken to qualify 'Śraddhām' it will make no difference in the sense of the verse; for in that case it will have to be construed as 'directed towards that particular god (तत्तत्तनुविषयिणीम्)'

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते।
लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हि तान्॥ २२ ॥

सः he (the devotee referred to in the preceding verse); तया श्रद्धया with such faith; युक्तः endowed; तस्य of that particular deity (whom he chooses to worship); आराधनम् worship; ईहते undertakes; च and; ततः through that deity; मया by Me; एव alone; विहितान् ordained; तान् those; कामान् desired enjoyments; हि positively; लभते obtains.

Endowed with such faith he worships that particular deity and obtains through him without doubt his desired enjoyments as ordained by Myself. (22)

In this verse the Lord shows that equipped with the faith stabilized by Him the devotee worships the deity of his choice according to the rules laid down in the scriptures, and as a reward for such worship obtains from the deity only such of his coveted enjoyments as have been preordained by the Lord. The celestials have not been authorized to give either more or less than what is ordained by the Lord. This shows that the position of the celestials in the divine government is more or less similar to that of constitutionally functioning officers presiding over different departments of administration in a well established Government. If such an officer desires to reward the services of an individual, he can bestow only as much as the individual is entitled to receive under rules for such services, and as the officer is empowered to give.

Some people in this verse connect the word 'Hitān' (conducive to good) with 'Kāmān' (enjoyments). But such an interpretation will be unwarranted for the simple reason that objects of enjoyment are anything but conducive to the interests of anyone in the real sense of the term.

Now, disparaging the fruit of worship of other gods referred to above as perishable, the Lord glorifies the reward of His own worship.

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम्।
देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि॥ २३ ॥

तु however; अल्पमेधसाम् तेषाम् gained by these people of small understanding; तत् that; फलम् fruit; अन्तवत् having an end, perishable; भवति is; देवयजः the worshippers of gods; देवान् the gods; यान्ति attain; मद्भक्ताः My devotees (howsoever they worship Me); माम् to Me; अपि alone; यान्ति (eventually) come.

The fruit gained by these people of small understanding, however, is perishable. The worshippers of gods attain the gods; whereas My devotees, howsoever they worship Me, eventually come to Me and Me alone. (23)

Though disparaged as "men of small understanding", the worshippers of gods referred to in this verse are far superior to the vile men who while abstaining from the worship of God are engaged in sinful acts, and have been denounced in verse 15 as stupid and possessed of a devilish disposition, inasmuch as they are not addicted to sin and worship the higher intelligences according to the procedure laid down in the scriptures, and are neither wholly devoid of intelligence nor possessed of a demoniac nature. They are certainly inferior to the devotees of God and deficient in intellect inasmuch as they worship the other deities as apart from God, and that too under the prompting of desires and for obtaining objects of enjoyment. Had their intellect not been deficient, they would have certainly grasped the truth that it is God Himself who in the form of so many deities receives all kinds of worship and oblations offered into the sacred fire that God alone is the supreme Lord of all (V.29; IX.24). It is because of this deficiency of intellect that they obtain an utterly insignificant and perishable reward for their sacrificial performances and other stupendous undertakings involving such arduous labour. Had they been wise and taken so much pains over the worship of God Himself with a sense of His glory, or had they worshipped the other deities as identical with the supreme Deity and with a view to pleasing Him, They could have attained with that much labour that great and rare fruit wherein lies the fulfilment of human existence.

Reaching the abode of the deity worshipped by them the devotees of gods attain nearness of the deity and a form similar to that of the deity and obtain celestial enjoyments peculiar to that region; that is what is meant by attaining the gods. This is the highest fruit obtained through worship of the gods; but all worshippers of gods do not obtain even this fruit. Many of them, who take to such worship for obtaining trivial and momentary enjoyments like the possession of a wife, progeny, wealth, honour and distinction etc., do not go beyond obtaining their desired objects of enjoyment. A few of them whose faith in their chosen deity has particularly developed and who love the deity more than the enjoyments of the world and remember the object of worship at the moment of death, migrate to the celestial worlds. But it should be borne in mind that the gods, the enjoyments obtained through them, and the worlds inhabited by them are all perishable. It is therefore that the fruit of their worship has been denounced as 'perishable'.

Constant residence by the side of the Lord in His own supreme eternal divine Abode, or union with God through identity with Him, both these are covered by the term "God-realization." In the eyes of the devotee of the enlightened type the whole world is a manifestation of God, so that he is already united with God at all times; hence the question of attaining God does not arise in his case at all. The devotee of the 'Jijñāsu' type too, seeking as he does to

know the truth about God, realizes Him as soon as the knowledge of that Truth dawns upon him. As for the other two types, *viz.*, the Arthārthī and the Ārta, they too attain none else than God through His grace. God is supremely merciful and the greatest friend of a soul. He does only that which is conducive to the best interests of the devotee,—which ensures his speedy access to Him. He sternly refuses to grant the prayer or avert the calamity of a devotee, even though the latter is insistent in his demand through ignorance, if by granting that prayer or averting that danger He should really be doing a disservice to him. He fulfils only those desires the satisfaction of which enhances the devotee's faith in, and love for the Lord. In this way the devotees of God, besides realizing the object of their desire, eventually succeed in realizing God Himself. The use of the word 'Api' at the end of the verse is intended to bring out this point.

In case a devotee having once forged a devotional link with God, with whatever object it may be, seeks to undo it, it is God's nature not to allow him to do so. Herein lies the glory of devotion to God. Having conferred on the devotee the object of his desire, or even withholding such object from him, if the same is likely to prove injurious in the long run, the spirit of devotion of God does not die. It stays in a dormant state within the heart to the devotee, and draws him to God whenever an opportunity presents itself. The boon of devotion once obtained, through whatever cause it may be, does not leave the devotee, even after many births, till it has brought him face to face with God. And once the devotee has realized God, the question of remission of devotion does not arise at all. In that state the devotee, the spirit of devotion and the deity become indistinguishably one.

The question here arises: If God is so full of love, and such a boundless ocean of mercy, that He invariably vouchsafes His realization to his worshippers howsoever they may worship Him, how is it that all of us do not take to His worship ? In reply to this query, the Lord says:—

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम्॥ २४॥

अबुद्धयः the ignorant; मम My; अनुत्तमम् unsurpassable; अव्ययम् undecaying; परम् supreme; भावम् nature; अजानन्तः not knowing; अव्यक्तम् beyond the reach of mind and senses; माम् Me (the supreme Spirit who is all truth, all knowledge and all bliss); व्यक्तिम् आपन्नम् to have assumed a finite form through birth (as an ordinary human being); मन्यन्ते believe.

Not knowing My unsurpassable and undecaying supreme nature, the ignorant believe Me, the supreme Spirit beyond the reach of mind and senses, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, to have assumed a finite form through birth (as an ordinary human being). (24)

The word 'Abuddhayaḥ' refers to the ignorant people who have no faith in the virtues, glory, reality and sports etc., of the Lord, and whose intellect is not only clouded with infatuation and bewildered by thoughts of the world but is also wholly enmeshed in the web of sophistry. It is something beyond their comprehension that the entire creation is but an amplification of the twofold Nature of God, and that being the ultimate

substratum of this twofold nature, God alone is supreme, and there is none who surpasses Him. His inconceivable and indescribable reality, character, glory and incomparable virtues cannot be rightly grasped through mind or described through speech. It is just in order to extend His helping hand to the creatures of this world and take them under His protection out of His infinite compassion and love for the suppliant that the Lord manifests Himself in various forms with all His power, maintaining His character as the unborn, imperishable, supreme Lord, and plunges the entire creation in an unbounded and unruffled ocean of supreme joy through His transcendent sports. This is what has been referred to here as the eternal, unsurpassed and supreme nature of God.

Being altogether beyond the ken of the material mind and senses, both the Absolute and the Qualified aspects of God are really unmanifest and supersensuous. God Almighty, who is unborn immortal and unmanifest, manifests Himself before the world in human and other forms, concealing His identity behind the veil of His Yogamāyā; His reality, therefore, remains practically unmanifest all the time. It is therefore that ignorant men, who have no knowledge of the truth, mysteries, virtues, and glory of the Lord, instead of regarding Him as the unborn and immortal Deity, who is beyond the reach of the mind and senses, look upon Him as an ordinary human being having a finite form.

Those who are inclined to the parochial view that God is ever unmanifest and unqualified and can never manifest Himself, are apt to take this verse to mean that "only ignorant men look upon God who is really unmanifest, i.e., formless and absolute, as having assumed a qualified and concrete human form." But this interpretation does not appear to be sound, inasmuch as both the Qualified and Absolute aspects of God are approved and recognized by the scriptures. The Lord Himself says, "Though unborn and immortal, and the Lord of all beings, I embody Myself forth from age to age, keeping My Nature (Prakṛti) under control, for protecting the virtuous, destroying the evil-doers, and establishing Dharma on a firm footing and so on (IV.6, 7 and 8). The alternative interpretation given above, therefore, conflicts with this statement of the Lord and demolishes the doctrine of Divine Descent, which can never be the intention of the Gītā.

Neither can the verse be interpreted to mean that "Only ignorant fools hold God with attributes appearing in a visible human form as unmanifest, that is, without attributes and without form." For the same Lord who is visible in an embodied form with attributes is also without form and attributes. Therefore, how can a man who knows this real truth be dubbed as ignorant ? The Lord Himself says: "All this is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest aspect (IX.4)." Therefore, the construction that has been put upon this verse appears to be the only sound interpretation.

It may be asked here: Why do people regard the Almighty Lord, appearing in human form, as an ordinary mortal ? In reply to this, the Lord says:—

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः।
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम्॥ २५॥

योगमायासमावृतः veiled by (My) Yogamāyā (divine potency); **अहम्** I; **सर्वस्य** to all; **प्रकाशः** manifest; **न** (am) not; **अयम्** this; **मूढः** ignorant; **लोकः** world; **माम्** Me; **अजम्** unborn; **अव्ययम्** (and)

imperishable; न not; अभिजानाति recognizes.

Veiled by My Yogamāyā (divine potency); I am not manifest to all. Hence these ignorant folk fail to recognize Me, the unborn and imperishable Supreme Deity (i.e., consider Me as subject to birth and death). (25)

The word 'Yogamāyā' denotes that divine potency of God by which He appears in and conceals various forms, and which is referred to as—Ātma-'Māyā' in IV.6, When the Lord manifests Himself in a human or other such form, He spreads the charm of this Māyā all about Himself and remains hidden behind this veil, even as an actor when he impersonates another character disguises his identity through his Māyā or histrionic tricks. This is what is meant by the Lord being veiled by 'Yogamāyā'.

When the Lord keeps Himself veiled by His Yogamāyā, the vision of ordinary men cannot pierce that veil; hence the majority of men regard Him as an ordinary human being like themselves. This is what is meant by His not being manifest to all. He reveals His identity to those alone who are His loving devotees and possess full faith in an reverence for His virtues, glory, true character and pastimes, and to whom He desires to make Himself known.

In common parlance we speak of the sun being veiled by the cloud; but, in reality, the sun never gets veiled, only the vision of people is obstructed by the cloud. If the sun got really veiled, there could be no light anywhere in any part of the universe. Even so, God is never really veiled by Māyā; if He got veiled, no devotee could ever gain a true vision of God. It is only with reference to the foolish and ignorant folk that he is said to be veiled. As a matter of fact, even the analogy of the sun does not apply to God; for a finite thing can never bear comparison with the infinite. The illustration of the sun has been employed only to convey a rough idea of the truth.

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Ayam' before 'Lokaḥ' indicates that the words refer to all kinds of ordinary ignorant people, other than the devotees of God, no matter whether they are virtuous or sinful, and not to any particular class.

Due to lack of reverence and love for the Lord the ordinary ignorant folk, not knowing His real nature, virtues, glory, sports and mysteries, labour under the delusion that Śri Kṛṣṇa was an ordinary human being like themselves subject to birth and death. They fail to recognize the fact that He was the unborn and imperishable God Himself, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

The Lord referred to Himself above as veiled by His Yogamāyā. This should not, however, be taken to mean that just as a man hiding himself behind a thick curtain can neither see nor be seen by those on the other side of the curtain, even so God too fails to perceive those who are unable to see Him. In order to clarify this and also to indicate that Yogamāyā is only a potency of God wholly subservient to Him and can never screen His Divine Knowledge, the Lord says:—

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन।
भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन॥ २६॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; समतीतानि belonging to the past; च and; वर्तमानानि existing at present; च so also; भविष्याणि those that are yet to come; भूतानि (all) beings; अहम् I; वेद know; तु but; माम् Me;

कश्चन न none (who is devoid of faith and devotion); वेद knows.

Arjuna, I know all beings, past as well as present, nay, even those that are yet to come; but none (devoid of faith and reverence) knows Me. (26)

The word 'Bhūtāni' in this verse stands for all living beings, both moving and immobile, scuh as gods, men, beasts, birds, insects and moths etc. The Lord says that He knows how and in what different species all these beings were born and existed at different times during the numberless Kalpas that have gone by, and what they did in those forms. He also knows how, in what particular species of life and in what part of the universe each one of them has been born in the present Kalpa, and what they are doing. Similarly, He knows how and what form each one of them will take and where will it be born in the coming Kalpas and what it will do.

Even this statement has been made only from the point of view of the world, inasmuch as the distinction of past, present and future does not exist in the eyes of God. In His unitary consciousness, which constitutes His very being, everything is ever patent and present. In fact, He is the great spirit of Time (Mahākāla), the basis of all conceptions of time; hence nothing is hidden from His view.

The use of the indeclinable 'Tu' is intended to bring out the utter dissimilarity of God from the Jīvas.

In verse 3 of this chapter the Lord has already said, "Among thousands of men scarce one knows Me in reality." Again, in verse 30, we shall read: "They know My intergral being, comprising Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña." In XI.54 also the Lord will be found to say, "Through single-minded devotion, can I be directly known in essence, perceived by men, and, even entered into." Therefore, the word 'Kaścana' in this verse should be understood to mean 'anyone among the ordinary ignorant men, other than the Lord's own devotees'. It is in order to bring out this point that the words "devoid of faith and devotion" have been added after 'Kaścana' within brackets. The next verse speaks of delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites (born of attraction and repulsion) as the cause of ignorance, which too proves that devotees who are free from likes and dislikes are in a position to know Him.

This gives rise to the question: How is it that none of the ignorant men who are devoid of faith and devotion is able to know Him ? The Lord proceeds to answer this question in the next verse:—

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत।
सर्वभूतानि सम्मोहं सर्गे यान्ति परन्तप॥ २७॥

परन्तप O chastiser of foes; भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; सर्गे in this world; इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन through delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites (such as pleasure and pain etc.) born of desire and hatred; सर्वभूतानि all living creatures; सम्मोहम् to infatuation; यान्ति are falling a prey.

O valiant Arjuna, through delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites (such as pleasure and pain etc.), born of desire and hatred, all living creatures in this world are falling a prey to infatuation. (27)

The words 'Icchā' and 'Dveṣa' in this verse stand for 'attraction' and 'repulsion', which have been referred to by the Lord in III.34 as the two principal enemies standing in the way of man's spiritual progress, and which have been further, declared, under the names of 'desire' and 'wrath' as the two main incentives to sin and the enemies of mankind (III.37). The pairs of opposites like joy and grief, pleasure and pain etc., which proceed from these two impulses are instrumental in tightening the hold of ignorance on the Jīva. That is why these two have been called by the name of 'delusion'.

The word 'Sarvabhūtāni' stands for the generality of men, excluding the devotees who worship God with true reverence and faith. Falling a prey to infatuation in the form of pairs of opposites like joy and grief, pleasure and pain etc., born of desire and hatred, they lose sight of the supreme goal of their life and ignore the practice of adoration and remembrance of God. Regarding the transient and momentary enjoyments of the world, which are productive of sorrow and fear, as a fount of delight, they continue to waste their precious lives in accumulating and enjoying those pleasures. This is what is meant by their falling a prey to infatuation.

The adjective 'Sarva' compounded with 'Bhūtāni' is apt to create a wrong impression in the mind of the hearer that all beings without exception are falling a prey to infatuation in the shape of pairs of opposites. Therefore, in order to obviate this misconception, the Lord says:—

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम्।
ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः॥ २८॥

तु but; येषाम् whose; पुण्यकर्मणाम् जनानाम् of men of virtuous deeds (performed in a disinterested spirit); पापम् sin; अन्तगतम् (has) come to an end; ते those; द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ताः freed from delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, joy and grief, etc. (born of attraction and repulsion); दृढव्रताः of firm resolve; माम् Me; भजन्ते worship (in every way).

But those men of virtuous deeds whose sins have come to an end, being freed from delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites (born of attraction and repulsion), worship Me with a firm resolve in every way. (28)

The indeclinable 'Tu' has been used to distinguish the great devotees of God from the ordinary men of the world.

The first half of the verse refers to those blessed souls who have been performing through successive births, noble deeds enjoined by the scriptures, such as the performance of sacrifices, charity and penance, etc., and practising devotion to God, who being prompted by latencies of past lives and good association perform noble deeds in a disinterested way and practise adoration of God even in the current life and who have attained purity of heart due to the total eradication of all evils in the shape of vicious tendencies and activities.

He alone is said to be free from delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites, who never and under no circumstance loses his balance of mind either in the midst of worldly joys and sorrows etc., or in their absence.

'Dṛḍhavratāḥ' refers to those devotees of firm resolve who remaining wholly

undaunted by the greatest of temptations and impediments triumph over them all by dint of their adoration, and most resolutely adhere to their pious and devotional views and vows without budging an inch from them.

'Worshipping God in every way' means recognizing Him as all-pervading, all-supporting, all-powerful, the Universal Soul and the Highest and Best Person and devoting all one's external and internal organs exclusively to His service. In other words, to ascertain the truth about God by the intellect, to reflect by the mind on the virtues, glory and reality of God and the secrets of His sports, to chant His names and praises by the lips, to offer salutation to Him by bowing the head, to employ the hands in His worship as well as in the service of the miserable and the distressed etc., who are His living embodiments, to use the eyes in beholding His images, to use the feet in visiting temples and sacred places etc., and offering all one's possessions wholly and solely to God to make oneself completely subservient to His and His will alone—all this is included in His all-round worship.

This naturally raises the question: What does such a sinless and virtuous devotee, who worships God with a firm resolve, seek, and what is the reward obtained by him? In reply to this the Lord says in the next two verses that such a devotee of firm resolve comes to know Him properly in His integral being, i.e., attains Him:—

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम्॥ २९॥
साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः।
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः॥ ३०॥

ये who; माम् Me; आश्रित्य taking refuge in; जरामरणमोक्षाय for deliverance from old age and death; यतन्ति strive; ते they; तत् that; ब्रह्म Brahma (the Absolute); कृत्स्नम् अध्यात्मम् the whole Adhyātma (the totality of Jīvas or embodied souls); अखिलम् कर्म the entire field of Karma (action); च and; साधिभूताधिदैवम् together with Adhibhūta (the field of Matter) and Adhidaiva (Brahmā, i.e., the Creator); च and; साधियज्ञम् along with Adhiyajña (the unmanifest Divinity dwelling in the heart of all beings as their witness); माम् Me (in My integral being); विदुः know; च and; युक्तचेतसः possessed of a steadfast mind; ये who; प्रयाणकाले at the hour of death; अपि even; विदुः know (thus); ते they (too); माम् Me (alone); विदुः know.

They who, having taken refuge in Me, strive for deliverance from old age and death know Brahma (the Absolute), the whole Adhyātma (the totality of Jīvas or embodied souls), and the entire field of Karma (action) as well as My integral being, comprising Adhibhūta (the field of Matter), Adhidaiva (Brahmā) and Adhiyajña (the unmanifest Divinity dwelling in the heart of all beings as their witness). And they who, possessed of a steadfast mind, know thus even at the hour of death, they too know Me alone. (29,30)

Deliverance from old age and death is impossible so long as one does not secure immunity from birth; and immunity from birth is attained only when the Jīva is wholly freed from the bondage of Karma caused by ignorance, and realizes God.

Realization of God, again, is attained only through constant practice of adoration carried on at all times with firm determination and in a disinterested way. And such adoration is possible only when man, taking recourse to the company of holy men, is freed from sins and totally renounces all the demoniac impulses of the mind. In this very chapter the Lord has already said, "Foolish and wretched men of evil deeds, who have embraced the demoniac nature, do not worship Me" (VII.15); it is therefore that in verse 27 as well, while pointing out the reason why people fail to know God, it has been stated that "through delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain etc., born of desire and hatred, all beings remain wholly merged in ignorance." The mind of men of this type remains crowded with desires for various kinds of enjoyments, and the desire for deliverance from birth and death, which follows the eradication of all other desires, does not awaken in their mind at all. It is therefore that while pronouncing His verdict as to who is eligible for consummate knowledge of God it has been stated in verse 28 that his sins having come to an end, he performs virtuous deeds, and being free from the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain etc., worships God with a firm resolve. The mind of such a sinless person alone is possessed with the blessed desire of being rid of the whirling of birth and death, and knowing and attaining God at the earliest moment. It is therefore that the Lord says, he alone who, giving up dependence on all worldly objects depends wholly and solely on God and keeps his mind and intellect constantly devoted to God alone with unwavering faith is said to strive having taken refuge in God.

In verse 1 of this chapter the Lord said to Arjuna, "With the mind attached to Me (मय्यासक्तमनाः) and practising Yoga (योगं युञ्जन्) with complete dependence on Me (मदाश्रयः) you will know Me in entirety." In these two concluding verses, substituting the word 'Yuktacetasaḥ' (possessed of a stead-fast mind) for 'Mayyāsaktamanāḥ', 'Mām Āśritya' (taking refuge in Me) for 'Madāśrayaḥ' and 'Yatanti' (strive) for "Yogaṁ Yuñjan", the Lord repeats the same idea, and says that he who strives having taken refuge in Him and worships Him with a firm resolve as mentioned in verse 28 above and with his mind fixed on Him knows Him in His integral being.

The word 'Brahma', qualified by the adjective 'Tat' points to the absolute and formless supreme Reality or supreme Spirit, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss; and knowledge of Brahma means full realization and direct perception of the truth of that Supreme Reality or Supreme Spirit. The term 'Adhyātma', with its attribute 'Kṛtsna', stands for the totality of individual souls, referred to by the Lord in this chapter as His Higher Nature (Parā Prakṛti), and in Chapter XV as the 'Akṣara', or imperishable soul. And Knowledge of 'Adhyātma, means knowledge of the fact that it is God Himself, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, who appears as many in the form of the individual souls; in fact, the whole 'Adhyātma', or the totality of Jīvas, has no separate existence from God. Again, the primeval volition of God, also known as 'Visarga' (discharge of spirits), from which all beings and all activities originate, is referred to as 'Karma' (this will be discussed in greater detail while explaining verse 3 of Chapter VIII). And knowledge of the entire field of action consists in knowing the fact that being God's volition, this 'Karma' is identical with God.

The term 'Adhibhūta' covers the whole range of perishable matter, which the Lord has referred to in this chapter as His lower

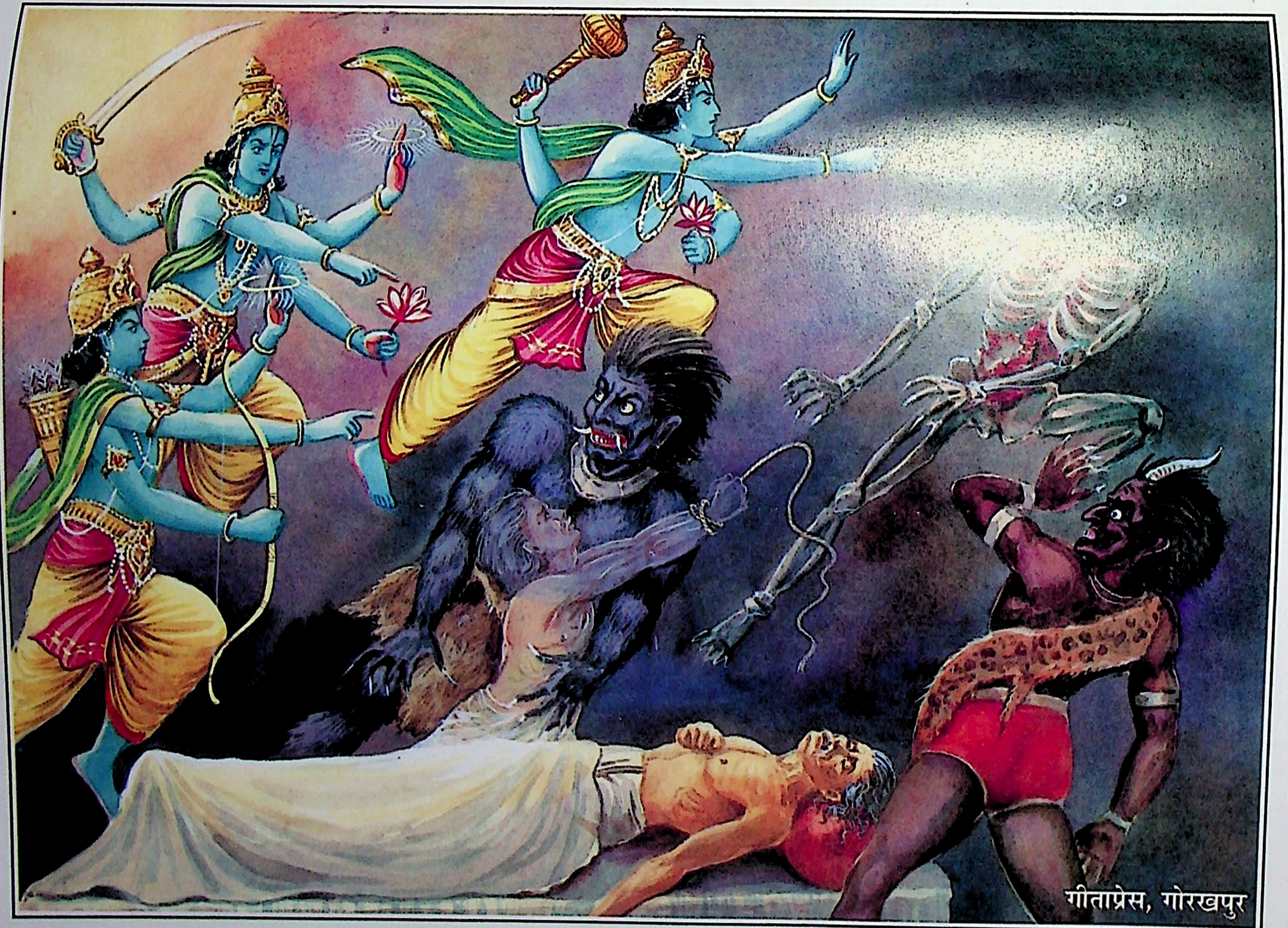
Nature (Aparā Prakṛti), and in Chapter XV as the 'Kṣara Puruṣa'. The Creator (Hiraṇyagarbha) who ensouls the totality of subtle bodies and who has been spoken of as 'Brahmā' in Chapter VIII is referred to as 'Adhidaiva'; and the term 'Adhiyajña' stands for that unmanifest aspect of God who pervades within the heart of all beings as the Inner Witness, as has been referred to in verses, 4, 5 and 6 of Chapter IX.

Brahma, or the absolute, Adhyātma or the totality of Jīvas, Karma or the primeval volition of God, Adhibhūta or the field of Matter, Adhidaiva or Brahmā (Creator) and Adhiyajña or the Inner Witness—all these are different aspects of one and the same God. The totality of these constitute His integral being. It was this integral being that the Lord promised in the beginning of this chapter to discuss. Again, it is this very integral Divinity that He has referred to in verse 7, saying, "There is nothing else whatsoever besides Me, Arjuna", and in verse 12 saying, "Whatever other entities are born of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, know them all as evolved from Me alone", as well as in verse 19 saying, "All this is God", and the Chapter has been concluded with a description of that very being in the words as stated above. To know all this, that is to say, to realize that just as the atom of water, vapour, cloud, smoke, water and ice—all these are nothing but different forms of water, even so Brahma, Adhyātma, Karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva, and Adhiyajña, all these are nothing but God, is the same as gaining the knowledge of Integral Brahma or God.

The word. 'Api' added after 'Prayāṇakāle' in the second half of verse 30 indicates that to say nothing of those who come to know God is His entirety as mentioned above according to the maxim "Everything is God", before death, even those who come to know Him in His entirety even at the hour of death, know Him in reality, i.e., attain Him. The word 'Api' has been similarly used while glorifying the state of Brahmic Bliss and the end of Chapter II too.

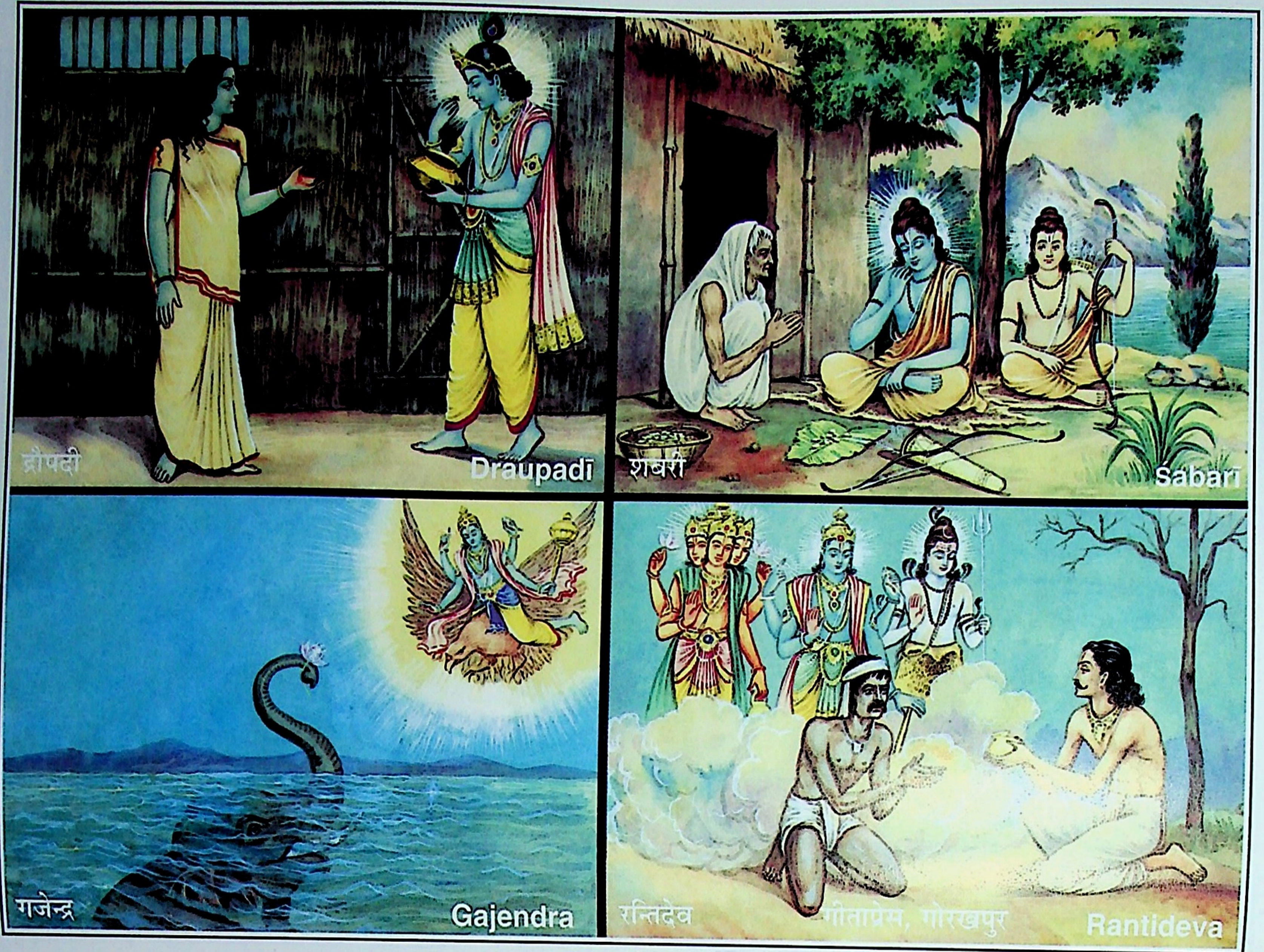
ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगो
नाम सप्तमोऽध्यायः॥ ७॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the seventh chapter entitled 'The Yoga of Jñāna (Knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma) and Vijñāna (Knowledge of manifest Divinity)".



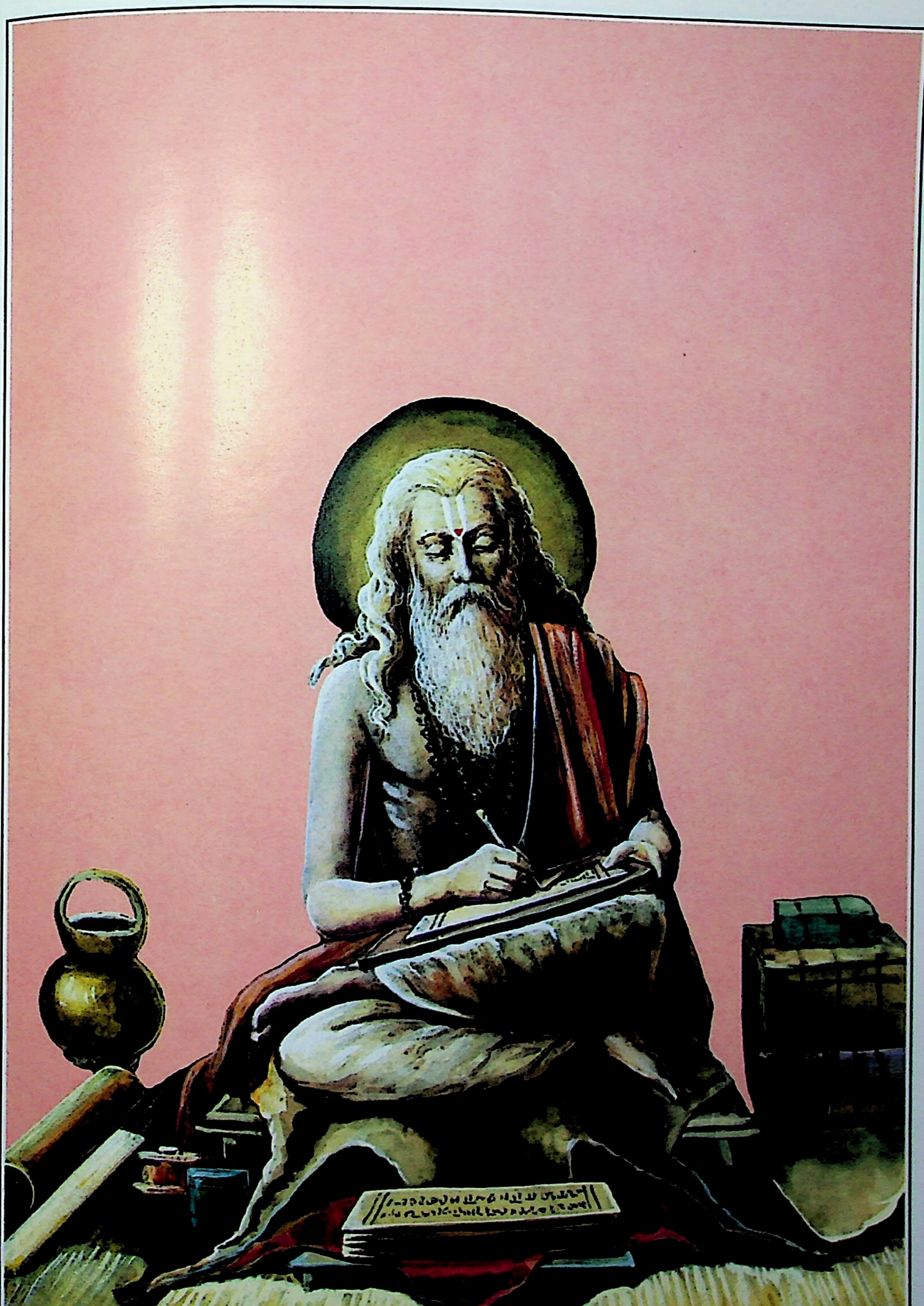
अजामिल-उद्धार

Redemption of Ajāmila



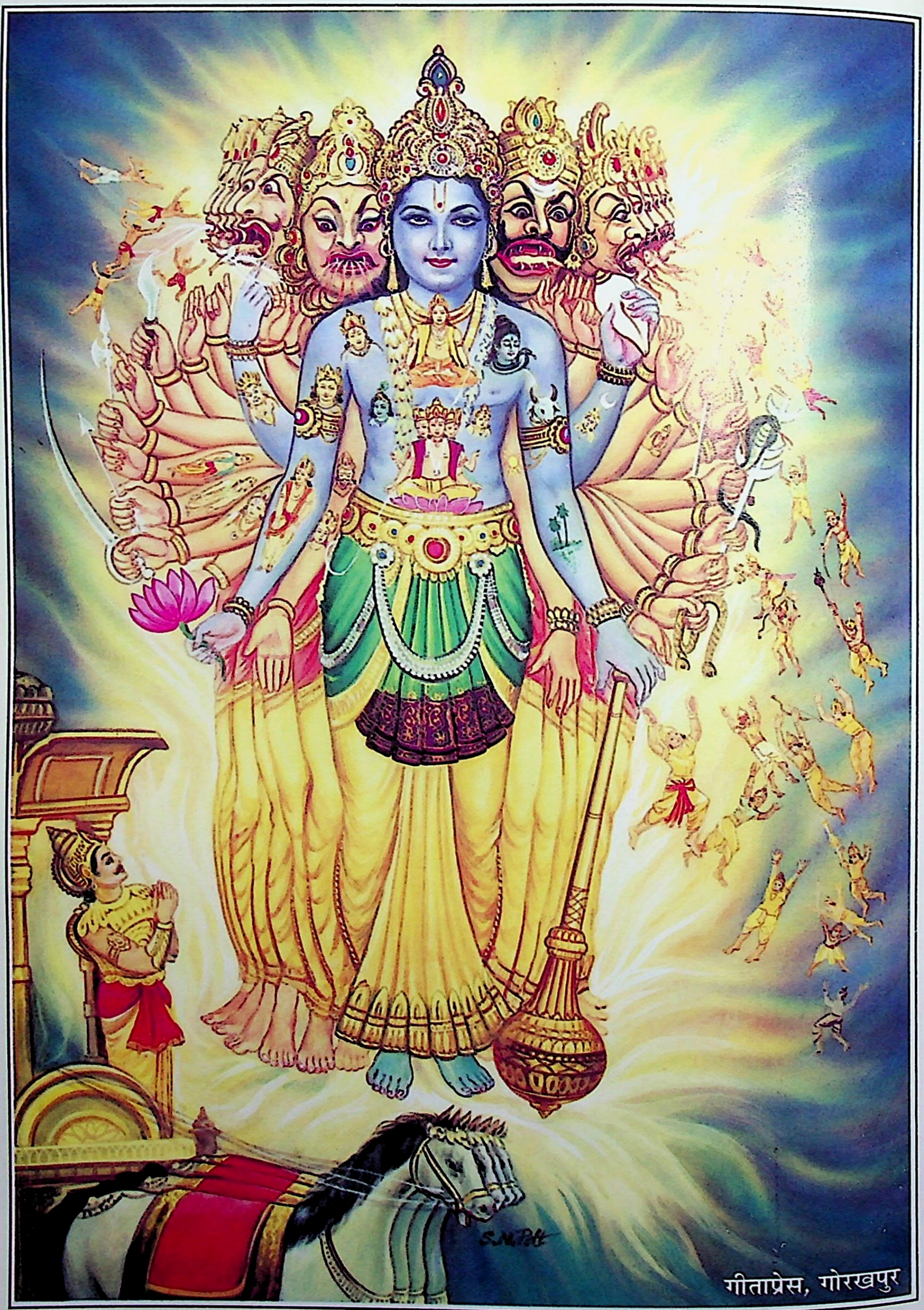
पत्र, पुष्प, फल, जलका ग्रहण

Trifle offerings accepted



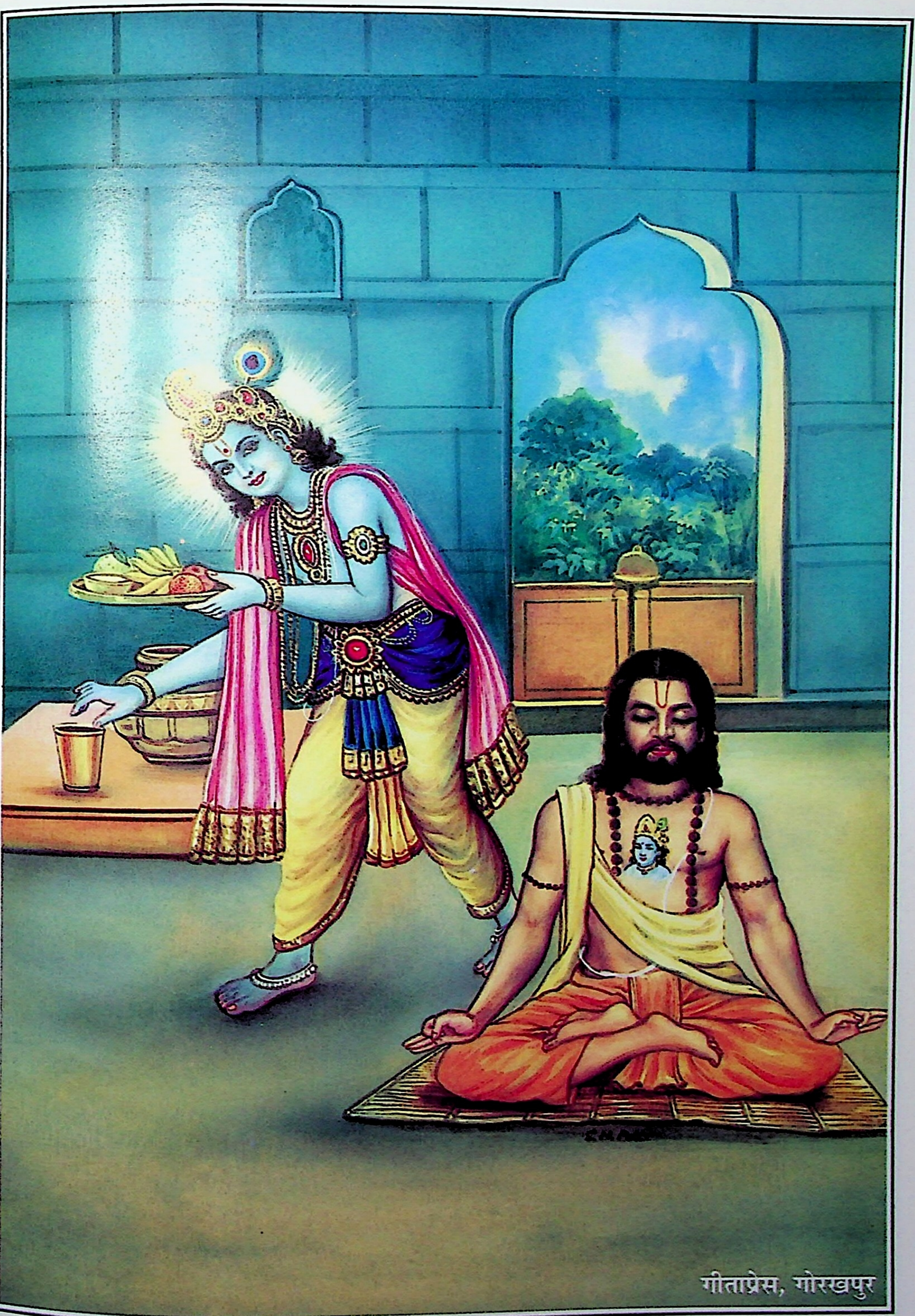
भगवान् वेदव्यास

Bhagavān Vedavyāsa



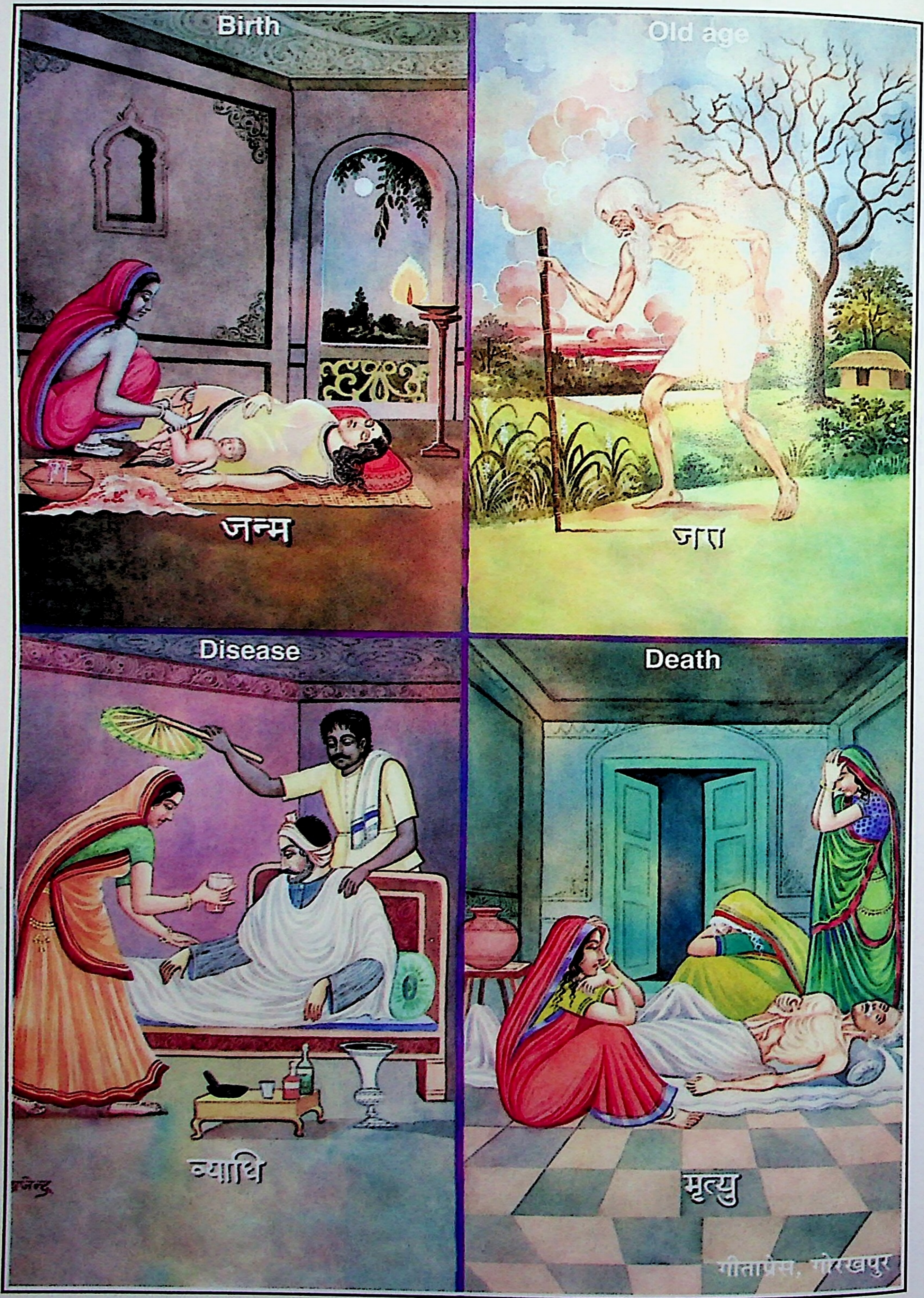
भगवान्‌का विश्वरूपदर्शन

Lord shows his cosmic body



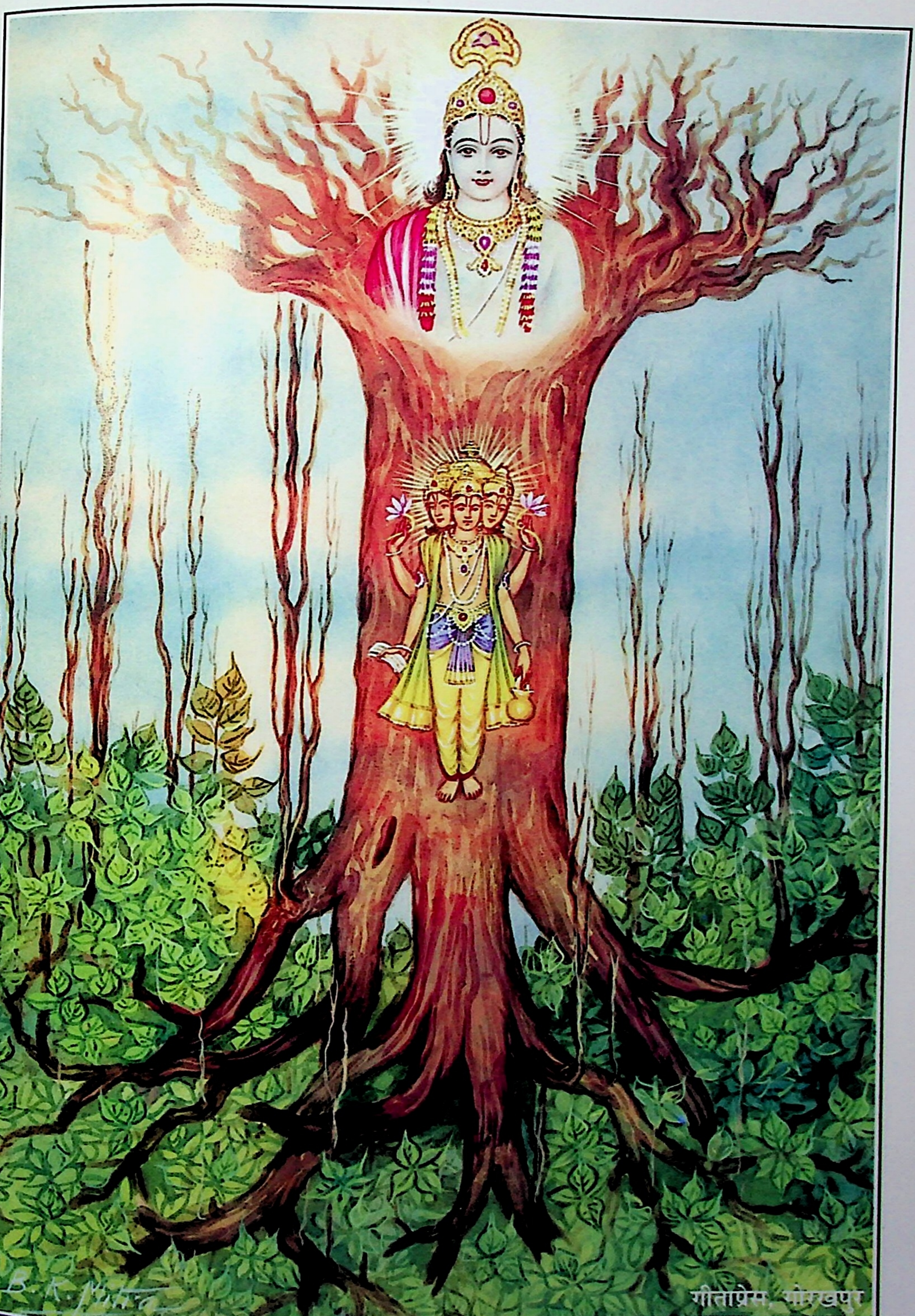
योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्

Yogakṣemaṁ Vahāmyaham



चार अवस्थाएँ

Four stages



संसार-वृक्ष

Universe—a tree



अनन्य शरणागति

Surrender unreserved

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter VIII

The words 'Akṣara' and 'Brahma' stand for both the qualified (VIII.21,24) and absolute (VIII.3,11) aspects of God, and the appellation of God 'OM' is also designated as 'Akṣara' and 'Brahma' (VIII.13). The present chapter has been given the title of 'Akṣarabrahmayoga' (The Yoga of the Indestructible Brahma) inasmuch as it deals with both the qualified and absolute aspects of God, as well as with 'OM'.

Title of the Chapter

Verses 1 and 2 of this chapter embody the seven questions asked by Arjuna regarding Brahma, Adhyātma and so on. Briefly answering these questions in verses 3 to 5 and stressing in the sixth the importance of the last thought at the time of death, the Lord exhorts Arjuna in the seventh to think of Him at all times. Verses 8 to 10 delineate the Yogic process of giving up the ghost while contemplating with devotion on the qualified and absolute aspects of God, and also point out the reward of such death. Glorifying the absolute aspect of the Spirit and showing the method of Japa and meditation on the Absolute through the process of Yogic concentration, as well as the fruit of such meditation in verses 11 to 13, the Lord declares in the fourteenth that an easy way to attain Him is to think of Him at all times with exclusive love. Pointing out in the fifteenth and the sixteenth that there is no more of rebirth for him who has realized God and that all the worlds in creation are subject to appearance and disappearance, the Lord defines the day and night of Brahmā and mentions the appearance as well as the disappearance of all created beings in verses 17 to 19. Establishing in the twentieth the existence of another eternal Unmanifest beyond the unmanifest Prakṛti, the Lord continues to speak of It in the twenty-first and the twenty-second under such names as the 'Indestructible', 'the supreme Goal', 'the supreme Abode', and 'the supreme Person', and declares exclusive Devotion as the means of attaining the same. Describing in verses 23 to 26 the bright and the dark paths and the states to which they lead, the Lord praises in the twenty-seventh the Yogī who knows the truth about these two paths and exhorts Arjuna to be a Yogī. He concludes the chapter with the twenty-eight, pointing out therein the reward of knowing this secret.

Summary of the Chapter

Calling upon Arjuna in verses 1 to 3 of Chapter VII to hear the truth relating to His integral Self, the Lord undertook to discuss the same and extolled those who possessed a knowledge of the same. He expounded the same truth in ways more than one and also explained at length the cause of not knowing it up to the twenty-seventh and finally concluded the chapter by praising the devotee who knows Him in entirety along with Brahma, Adhyātma, Karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña. Failing to grasp fully the inwardness of Brahma, Adhyātma, Karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña as

Link of the Discourse

described in verses 29 and 30 and the secret of knowing God at the time of death, Arjuna proceeds to ask his seven questions concerning these seven categories in the first two verses of this chapter.

अर्जुन उवाच

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते॥ १॥

पुरुषोत्तम O Best among men; **तत्** that; **ब्रह्म** Brahma (Absolute); **किम्** what (is); **अध्यात्मम्** Adhyātma (Spirit); **किम्** what (is); **कर्म** Karma (Action); **किम्** what (is); **अधिभूतम्** Adhibhūta (Matter); **किम्** what; **प्रोक्तम्** has been designated as; **च** and; **अधिदैवम्** Adhidaiva (divine intelligence); **किम्** what; **उच्यते** is spoken of as.

Arjuna said : Kṛṣṇa, what is that Brahma (Absolute), what is Adhyātma (Spirit), and what is Karma (Action) ? What is called Adhibhūta (Matter) and what is termed as Adhidaiva (divine intelligence) ? **(1)**

The word 'Brahma' is used to denote various entities such as the Vedas, the Creator, the absolute Divinity, Prakṛti (Primordial matter) and Om etc. The object of Arjuna's question is to know which of the above entities is referred to in the present context.

Similarly, the word 'Adhyātma' signifies the body, the senses, mind, intellect, the individual soul, the Oversoul and many more such entities. Arjuna seeks to know by this verse which of the above is meant by the Lord when He speaks of 'Adhyātma' in the present context.

It is doubtful, again whether 'Karma' denotes activity in general or noble pursuits such as the performance of sacrifices, charity and so on. Or does it signify the threefold varieties of past action, such as 'Prārabdha' (that which has begun to bear fruit in the shape of a pleasurable or painful experience) etc. ? Or again, does it denote the act of creation of this universe by God ? Arjuna's intention is to have this point elucidated.

Similarly, does the word 'Adhibhūta' mean the five gross elements, or the whole order of living beings, the entire range of objective reality or any other substance ? Arjuna's query: 'What is called Adhibhūta ?' is intended to clear up this doubt.

Finally, Arjuna wants to know whether the term 'Adhidaiva' means a particular deity presiding over some material phenomenon, or destiny, or Hiraṇyagarbha (the Creator), the individual soul, or any other entity.

Addressing the Lord as 'Puruṣottama' in this verse, Arjuna intends to convey that He is the best of all persons, omniscient, omnipotent, the controller and support of all. He thereby suggests that no one else in the world can answer his queries as satisfactorily and correctly as the Lord can do.

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः॥ २॥

मधुसूदन O killer of the demon Madhu, i.e., Śrī Kṛṣṇa; **अत्र** here; **अधियज्ञः** Adhiyajña (the Lord of all sacrifices); **कः** who (is); **अस्मिन् देहे** in this body; **कथम्** how (does it dwell); **च**

and; नियतात्मभिः by those of steadfast mind; प्रयाणकाले at the hour of death; कथम् how; ज्ञेयः to be realized; असि (You) are.

Kṛṣṇa, who is Adhiyajña here and how does he dwell in the body ? And how are You to be realized at the time of death by those of steadfast mind ? (2)

The object of Arjuna's query in this verse is to know whether the term 'Adhiyajña' denotes any particular deity, or God, who is the inner witness, or any other being. He further wants to know as to how that 'Adhiyajña' resides in the bodies of the various living beings, and why it is called by that name.

The word 'Niyatātmabhiḥ' in this verse refers to those whom the Lord described as 'Yuktacetasaḥ' in the concluding verse of Chapter VII. With regard to those men of steadfast mind Arjuna now seeks to know how they fix their mind on God before realizing Him at the moment of death. Is it by means of breath-control, or Japa, or remembrance, or meditation, or Samādhi ?

Out of the seven questions asked by Arjuna above, the Lord now takes up first of all those relating to Brahma, Adhyātma and Karma, and briefly answers them seriatim in the following verse:—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसञ्ज्ञितः ॥ ३ ॥

परमम् अक्षरम् the supreme Indestructible; ब्रह्म (is) Brahma; स्वभावः one's own self (the individual soul); अध्यात्मम् Adhyātma (the Spirit); उच्यते is called; भूतभावोद्भवकरः that which brings forth the existence of beings; विसर्गः the discharge (of spirits); कर्मसञ्ज्ञितः is termed as Karma (Action).

Śrī Bhagavān said: The supreme Indestructible is Brahma; one's own self (the individual soul) is called Adhyātma; and the discharge of spirits (Visarga), which brings forth the existence of beings, is called Karma (Action). (3)

By adding the qualification 'supreme' to the word 'Indestructible', the Lord intends to convey that the word 'Brahma' mentioned in VII.29 stands for the absolute, formless Divinity, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, and not for the Vedas, Brahmā (the Creator), Prakṛti (primordial Matter), or any other substance, 'Supreme' means the subtlest and the best. Whatever entities are denoted by the terms 'Brahma' and 'Akṣara' the supreme Reality or God (who is the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss) alone is the highest and the best of them all; therefore, the words 'Supreme Indestructible' in this verse refer to the supreme Reality or the Oversoul. This supreme Reality or Oversoul is in reality the same as God.

'Svabhāva' (Svaḥ Bhāvaḥ) means one's own being. It is the conscious, higher Nature of God in the form of the individual soul, which constitutes His own being. When this changeless aspect or higher nature of God permeates the lower or material Nature in the shape of body, senses, mind and intellect, etc., which all go by the name of self, and presides over them, it is termed as 'Adhyātma'. Therefore, the word 'Adhyātma' with its

qualifying adjunct 'Kṛtsna' in VII.29 should be interpreted to mean 'the totality of conscious spirits of individual souls.' This conscious higher Nature, being a part of God, is identical with God; therefore, the totality of Jīvas, or 'Adhyātma' as it is called, is also identical with, or the same as, God.

The word 'Bhūta forming part of the compound word 'Bhūtabhāvodhavakaraḥ' stands for all living beings, both sentient and insentient. The 'Visarga' or discharge which brings forth the existence of beings and advances their cause, and which is the very basis of the creation and preservation of the universe, is called Karma or action. During the final dissolution, all creatures of the universe, along with their individual latencies of Karma, get absorbed into God, and their varying natures similarly lose themselves into Prakṛti or primordial Matter in a manner which is almost tantamount to absorption. At the beginning of the next creation when God wills: "I am One, let Me be many", they are brought forth again. It is this primeval resolve of God which is referred to as the discharge of spirits or consciousness in the womb of inert Nature. This constitutes the conjunction of Spirit with Matter. This, again, represents the great discharge; and it is this discharge which is called 'Visarga'. It is this process which is responsible for bringing forth the various creatures. It is therefore that the Lord says, "The birth of all beings follows from this combination of Matter and Spirit". (XIV.3) This is what is meant by the springing into existence of beings. Therefore, it should be understood here that by 'Visarga' is meant that primeval resolve of God which brings forth the existence of all living beings and advances their cause. And it is the great feat of God in the shape of this Visarga which quickens inert Matter with life and activates it, with the result that there is an unceasing flow of endless Karmas in the universe till the very end of creation through final dissolution. Therefore, it is this 'Visarga' which goes by the name of Karma (action). It is this which the Lord refers to as 'the entire field of Karma or action' in VII.29. This great discharge by God, which brings forth the existence of beings, is itself a great cosmic sacrifice. From this great sacrifice have originated the various other forms of sacrifice in the world; and the process of offering oblations of clarified butter etc., during such sacrifices has also been termed as 'Visarga'. These sacrifices also bring forth the existence of beings. The code of Manu says:—

"The oblation thrown into the sacred fire in accordance with the Vedic injunctions goes to the sun, and showers descend from the sun; even so crop follows from rainfall and creatures take their descent from food."* (III.36)

This 'Visarga' known by the name of 'Karma' is in reality nothing but the primeval resolve of God. Therefore, it is also identical with God.

The Lord now proceeds to answer adseriatim Arjuna's queries about Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña.

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम्।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर॥ ४॥

क्षरः भावः (all) perishable objects; **अधिभूतम्** (are) Adhibhūta; **पुरुषः** the shining Puruṣa (Brahmā); **अधिदैवतम्** (is) Adhidaiva; **च** and; **देहभृताम् वर** O best among embodied beings, i.e.,

* अग्नौ प्रास्ताहुतिः सम्यगादित्यमुपतिष्ठते। आदित्याज्जायते वृष्टिर्वृष्टेरन्नं ततः प्रजाः॥

Arjuna; अत्र देहे in this body; अहम् I (the all-pervading Deity); एव alone; अधियज्ञः (am) Adhiyajña (as the inner witness of all).

All perishable objects are Adhibhūta; the shining Puruṣa (Brahmā) is Adhidaiva; and in this body I Myself, dwelling as the inner witness, am Adhiyajña, O Arjuna ! (4)

The lower Nature of God, and all its evolutes which are perishable in character, are covered by the term 'Kṣarabhāva'. It is this very category which has been spoken of as 'Kṣetra' (the body) in Chapter XIII, and as the 'Kṣara' Puruṣa or perishable entity in Chapter XV. This 'Kṣarabhāva' is present before us in the form of the body, senses, mind, intellect, ego, the elements and the various objects of senses, and is dependent on the Jīva; in other words, it is sustained by the conscious higher nature of God, which is the same as the soul or spirit. It is collectively known as Adhibhūta. In Chapter VII, the Lord has already declared the Aparā or lower (insentient) nature also as His own nature. Hence the 'Kṣarabhāva' referred to in this verse necessarily belongs to God, and is therefore identical with God. The Lord Himself says, "I am being and non-being both." (IX.19).

The word 'Puruṣa' in this verse stands for the 'First Person' or 'Brahmā', who is known by the names of Sūtrātmā, Hiraṇyagarbha and Prajāpati as well. It is he who represents the vital energy or life of the whole creation, sentient and insentient. All divine intelligences or deities constitute his limbs. He is the controller, lord and progenitor of all. That is why he is termed as 'Adhidaiva' (the presiding deity). It is God Himself who takes the form of Adhidaiva. Therefore, he too is identical with God.

Arjuna's query with reference to Adhiyajña was twofold, viz., who is Adhiyajña and how does he dwell in the body ? The Lord answers both these questions in one sentence. The Lord Himself is the enjoyer and lord of all sacrifices (V.29; IX.24), and it is He who dispenses the fruit of all actions (VII.22). Therefore, He says in this verse, "I Myself am Adhiyajña". The indeclinable 'Eva' used in this connection should be taken to imply that even 'Adhibhūta' and 'Adhidaiva' are not distinct from Him. Now in reply to the first part of the query the Lord explicitly says that He is Himself 'Adhiyajña'; but with reference to the question how he dwells in the body, He has simply hinted that He dwells 'in this body'. It is the all-pervasive aspect of God in the form of the inner witness which dwells in the body; that is why the meaning of the Lord has been made explicit by adding the words 'as the inner witness' in the translation. In His all-pervasive form as the inner witness God indwells all; it is therefore that referring to Himself as the Divine Person in verses 8 and 10 of this chapter, and as the 'eternal Unmanifest' in the twentieth, He brings out His all-pervasive and all-sustaining character in the twenty-second. Verses 4 and 5 of Chapter IX also reveal the all-pervasive character of the Unmanifest aspect of God. The Lord speaks of that unmanifest, subtle and all-pervasive aspect of His as 'Adhiyajña' in this verse, and in order to show His identity with it openly declares "I am Myself Adhiyajña".

In addressing Arjuna as 'the best of all embodied beings', the Lord's intention is to convey that Arjuna was a devotee of the Lord and was thus capable of grasping His meaning from a mere hint. The hint given by the Lord, viz., that He Himself is 'Adhiyajña', should therefore suffice to make it clear to him that He is everything. It should not be difficult for Arjuna to understand this.

Replying thus to six of the seven queries of Arjuna, the Lord now commences His reply to the seventh and the last question relating to the time of death.

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम्।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ ५ ॥

यः who; अन्तकाले at the hour of death; च even; माम् Me; एव alone; स्मरन् thinking of; कलेवरम् the body; मुक्त्वा leaving; प्रयाति departs; सः he; मद्भावम् My own state; याति attains; अत्र about this; संशयः doubt; न not; अस्ति there is.

He who departs from the body, thinking of Me alone even at the time of death, attains My state; there is no doubt about it. (5)

The indeclinable 'Ca' has been used in this verse in the sense of 'Api' (even). By the use of this word the Lord has brought out the importance of birth in the human species. The point is to show that birth in the human species is attained by the grace of God only after the Jīva has passed through eight million and four hundred thousand sub-human species. If man fails to realize God even after obtaining such a rare opportunity, there is no knowing what a sorry plight he may come to when he will be blessed with a human body again. Realizing this, one can turn to account one's human life up to the very last moment, if he cares to do so. Thus making a special occasion of the hour of death, the Lord says that to say nothing of those who think exclusively of Him at all times, even he who remembers Him even up to the last moment of his life undoubtedly realizes Him. Thus without minimizing the efficacy of constant remembrance of God, the Lord lays down that one who remembers God even at the moment of departure from the body attains God.

The word 'Mām' (Me) in this verse stands for that integral Divinity which the Lord undertook in the very opening verse of Chapter VII to discuss, and which He actually discussed with proper explanation in verses 29 and 30 of the same chapter. All aspects of God are included in that integral Divinity. Even if anyone, therefore, fixes his mind on a particular form knowing it to be God, it is Him alone that one remembers. And the names, virtues, glory and stories etc., connected with His various descents also serve to awaken His thought, for in recalling these God is automatically recalled. Hence to remember the names, virtues, glory and sports etc., of God is equivalent to remembrance of God Himself.

Interposition of the word 'Eva' between 'Mām' and 'Smaran' indicates that giving up the thought of one's father and mother, kith and kin, wife and progeny, wealth and power, honour and prestige and even heavenly bliss etc., such a man remembers God alone. The organ of thought is mind. The use of the word 'Eva', which shuts out every other thought, therefore indicates that his mind is fixed exclusively on God.

Attainment of the divine state covers both liberation in any of its six forms, such as Sāyujya or oneness with the Lord, and realization of the Absolute. Which particular state the Sādhaka attains is dependent on his choice. A Sādhaka reaches the state on which he sets his heart.

Concluding the verse by saying, "there is no doubt about it", the Lord lays particular emphasis on the fact that he who remembers Him at the last moment of his life is sure to realize Him, no matter where and when he dies, and how he has conducted himself in the past. His liberation is assured.

It has been stated above that he who dies with his thought fixed on God attains God and God alone. This naturally raises the question whether this holds good particularly in the case of God-remembrance alone or it is true of every other thought. Anticipating this question the Lord says:—

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम्।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावित: ॥ ६ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; अन्ते at the last (moment); यम् यम् whatever; भावम् entity; वा अपि no matter; स्मरन् thinking of; कलेवरम् the body; त्यजति (one) leaves; तम् तम् that and that; एव alone; एति (one) attains; सदा ever; तद्भावभावित: absorbed in its thought.

Arjuna, thinking of whatever entity one leaves the body at the time of death, that and that alone one attains, being ever absorbed in its thought. (6)

The word 'Bhāva' in this verse stands for all categories of being, both material and spiritual, such as God, celestial beings, men, beasts, birds, insects, moths, plants, land, house etc.

The word 'Ante' (last moment) here denotes the point of time when the individual soul, together with the life-breath, senses, mind and intellect, gets disjoined from the physical body.

* * *

Verses 14 and 15 of Chapter XIV declare the three modes of Prakṛti viz. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (the principles of harmony, motion and inertia) as the factors determining one's birth in a higher or lower species; whereas verse 16 of the same chapter attributes such birth to the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika character of one's activities in life. The present verse, however, holds the last thought at the time of death responsible for the nature of one's coming birth. The seeming contradiction between these two kinds of statements will disappear if we examine them more closely, which we shall presently do.

Whatever action a man performs leaves its impressions on his mind in the form of a tendency. The mind thus remains crowded with innumerable tendencies of this kind. Man's thoughts and remembrances are determined by these latencies as assisted by an exciting cause. When latencies of the Sāttvika type come to the forefront due to the predominance of Sāttvika actions, man's character becomes predominantly Sāttvika, and his thoughts also become Sāttvika. Even so, when the Rājasika and Tāmasika tendencies gain the upper hand due to predominance of Rājasika or Tāmasika actions, man's character becomes predominantly Rājasika or Tāmasika and his thoughts also conform to his character. Thus there being unity between action, character and thought, there can be no objection to our calling any of them as the determining cause of a future birth. For that makes no difference as a matter of fact.

Now one can easily understand that a man dying with the thought of a celestial, human being, animal or plant or any other living object uppermost in his mind is reborn in a corresponding species. But how does a man who dies with the thought of a lifeless material object, such as land or a house, attain the object on his next birth ? Our answer to this question is that a person dying with the thought of land, house etc., takes birth in a higher or lower species according to his nature and the character of his actions. And born in that birth, he gets material objects such as land and house etc.,

which were the centres of his thought at the dying moment in his former life. That is to say, in whatever species he is born, he will be connected with such objects in that very life. Just as the owner of a house identifies himself with the house, so does a bird building a nest in it, or a mouse or ant or any other animal making holes in it and living in those holes identify itself with it. This should make it clear that in every species of life one can indirectly obtain any kind of material object.

* * *

It stands to reason that thinking of whatever object man leaves the body at the time of death, he attains that very object. But the question remains: why do we think of a particular object at the time of death ? In reply to this question the Lord says that as a general rule only that thought appears at the time of death, which has constantly engaged our mind. Just as chemists and druggists infuse certain medicinal properties into a substance by soking it again and again in a particular type of a fluid, even so man gets absorbed in the thought of an object which he repeatedly revolves in his mind under the influence of latencies of past actions as well as of his present association, environment, attachment, desire, fear and studies. The word 'Sadā' points to the constancy of thought. That is to say, whatever thought we constantly and repeatedly revolve in our mind for a sufficient length of time gets crystallized into a habit. This is what is meant by "constantly remaining absorbed in a particular thought". The general rule is that whatever thought is crystallized into a habit automatically comes to the surface of the mind at the moment of death.

Although in the majority of cases only that thought which has been upper-most in our mind throughout life comes to the forefront at the moment of death, there are exceptions to this rule. As in the case of Jaḍa Bharata, who died with the thought of a fawn which he had nurtured only during the last days of his life, he thought that has constantly and exclusively engaged our mind during the concluding portion of our life even for a short period supersedes our old habits of thought and appears on the surface of our mind at the time of death.

How our posthumous state is determined by the last thought at the hour of death can be clearly understood with the help of a homely illustration. All of us know our impression in a photograph exactly conforms to the pose that we adopt just at the moment when the photo is taken. So does the thought of a man at the moment of death determines what form he is going to assume in the next birth. Our mind at the time of death represents the film of a camera; the thought appearing in it at that time resembles the impression taken on the film; and the physical form that we assume in our next birth represents the actual photo. Therefore, just as the photographer warns us to get ready for the photo, and just as he who shakes his limbs at that moment heedless of the photographer's warning spoils his own picture, even so God, who creates all forms, gives the warning to man that the time of taking the picture of his next embodiment is very near, the photo may be taken at any moment, and if he does not take care, his picture may be spoiled. Taking heed in this case consists in practising constant remembrance of God; and thinking of objects other than God is equivalent to spoiling the picture.

Thinking of whatever object a man dies, that very object does he attain in his next life. And generally that thought alone haunts a man at the time of death, which has mostly engaged his mind during his lifetime. This having been established, it becomes

indispensable for one who aspires for God-realization to remember God at the last moment of one's life. When that last moment may suddenly arrive, no one knows. Therefore, in the next verse, the Lord exhorts Arjuna to think of Him at all times and fight.

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥७॥

तस्मात् therefore; सर्वेषु कालेषु at all times; माम् Me; अनुस्मर think at all times of; च and; युध्य fight; मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिः having set your mind and intellect on Me; असंशयम् without doubt; माम् Me; एव alone; एष्यसि you will come to.

Therefore, Arjuna, think of Me at all times and fight. With mind and reason thus set on Me, you will doubtless come to Me. (7)

The word 'Tasmāt' connects this verse with the preceding two verses. The intention is to emphasize that the human body is transient; the end may come any moment. If constant remembrance of God does not become habitual with us and life departs from the body even while we are engaged in the thought of enjoyments of the world, human life, which is a passport for God-realization, will have been frittered away in vain. Therefore, remembrance of God should be constantly practised.

The case for constant God-remembrance is thus fully established and it is but reasonable for the Lord to exhort Arjuna to practise the same. But why should the Lord command him in the same breath to fight as well ? Our answer to this question is that Arjuna was a Kṣatriya by birth, and participation in a righteous war is the duty of a Kṣatriya enjoined upon him by his very birth. Warfare should, therefore, be understood here to cover all activities performed with a view to discharging the obligations devolving on a man by virtue of his Varṇa or order in society and Āśrama or stage in life. Actions performed in a disinterested spirit as a behest from God and with a view to discharging the duties enjoined upon him by his Varṇa and Āśrama, make for purification of the heart. Besides this, verses 4 to 30 of Chapter III advance many other weighty reasons establishing the necessity of performing one's duty, a careful consideration of which will lead us to conclude that the duties attaching to one's Varṇa and Āśrama must necessarily be performed. Commanding Arjuna to fight the Lord intends to bring out this point.

The use of the indeclinable 'Ca' is intended to give priority to remembrance over all other duties. Warfare and other duties enjoined by one's Varṇa and Āśrama are performed according to the need of the occasion, and in conformity with certain prescribed rules at the time appointed for them; and it is in that way that they ought to be performed. As for remembrance of God, however, man needs must perform it at all times and under all circumstances.

One may ask here : How can it be possible to carry on side by side remembrance of God, on the one hand, and such strenuous functions enjoined by one's Varṇa and Āśrama as participation in a fight, on the other. Our answer is that they can be easily carried on together. There are diverse ways of doing it, varying according to the ideas, taste and competence of Sādhakas. The devotee who possesses adequate knowledge of God's virtues and glory and loves none but Him, and who knows the world not only as a

creation of God but as really identical with Him and also as a stage for divine sports, ever sees God as if present before his eyes in every particle of matter even as Prahlāda and the cowherd damsels of Vraja did; therefore, it is quite easy for him to carry on other activities side by side with constant remembrance of God. Even so the Sādhaka who having developed an aversion for worldly enjoyments has made God the principal object of his love, and who performs duties as enjoined by his Varṇa and Āśrama in a disinterested spirit as a behest from God Himself and only for His sake, can also perform other actions side by side with constant remembrance of God. Just as a rope-dancer performs acrobatic feats of various kinds while minding the balance of his feet on the rope, or even as a chauffeur chats with the inmates of his car and also goes on watching the road so as to avoid an accident, all the time focussing his attention on the wheel, even so the duties attaching to one's Varṇa and Āśrama can be efficiently performed even while constantly remembering God.

Grasping by the intellect the virtues and glory of God as well as the truth relating to Him and making a firm resolve with supreme faith, and constantly dwelling with the mind on God no less than on His virtues and glory with exclusive faith and love—this is what is meant by setting one's mind and reason on God. The phrase 'Madgatena Antarātmanā' at the end of Chapter VI expresses the same idea.

Arjuna's seventh query was briefly answered in verse 5, which describes the destiny of one who dies with the thought of God uppermost in his mind. The same question is now dealt with in detail in the following three verses, which describe the final state reached by the Yogīs who having controlled the mind through the Yoga of discipline dwell on the Adhiyajña aspect of God, i.e., the formless unmanifest God with attributes.

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन्॥ ८॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; **अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन** disciplined through Yoga in the form of practice of meditation; **नान्यगामिना** not wandering after anything else; **चेतसा** with the mind; **अनुचिन्तयन्** constantly engaged in contemplation (of God); **परमम्** supremely effulgent; **दिव्यम्** divine; **पुरुषम्** Being, i.e., God; **याति** attains.

Arjun, he who with his mind disciplined through Yoga in the form of practice of meditation and thinking of nothing else, is constantly engaged in contemplation of God attains the supremely effulgent divine Puruṣa (God). (8)

Practice of the limbs of Yoga such as Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā and Dhyāna is called 'Abhyāsayoga'. A mind which has been thoroughly disciplined through this Yoga and remains constantly engaged in practice is called 'Abhyāsayogayukta'.

A mind which when employed in the thought of a specific object does not deviate from it even for a moment to think of any other object, or in other words, which remains constantly and exclusively fixed on the object of meditation is known as 'Nānyagāmin.' The subject of discussion here being God, the word should be taken to refer to a mind which remains exclusively

fixed on God.

The supremely effulgent divine Puruṣa mentioned in this verse is the same as the all-pervading, formless and unmanifest God with attributes, who creates, sustains and destroys the universe, and who has been referred to as 'Adhiyajña' in verse 4 and as 'the supreme Puruṣa' in verse 22 of this chapter. Knowing Him in reality through constant meditation, and becoming one with Him as what is meant by attaining that supreme divine Puruṣa.

Having spoken about the attainment of the divine Puruṣa, the Lord now proceeds to describe Him.

कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः।
सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात्॥ ९॥

यः who; कविम् all-wise; पुराणम् ageless; अनुशासितारम् Ruler of all; अणोरणीयांसम् minuter than the minute; सर्वस्य धातारम् sustainer of all; अचिन्त्यरूपम् having a form beyond human conception; आदित्यवर्णम् refulgent as the sun; तमसः परस्तात् far beyond the darkness of ignorance; अनुस्मरेत् contemplates on.

He who contemplates on the all-wise, ageless Being, the Ruler of all, subtler than the subtle, the universal sustainer, possessing a Form beyond human conception, refulgent like the sun and far beyond the darkenss of ignorance. (9)

Bringing out the glory of the supreme divine Puruṣa, the Lord says that He is ever in the know of everything. There is nothing in the physical, astral and causal worlds, past, present or future, visible or invisible, which He does not really know; hence He is all-wise. He is the beginning of all; no one existed or ever came into before Him, nor has He any cause or origin. He Himself is the origin of everything, and is the most ancient of all. Hence He is ageless. He is the universal Lord and is all powerful and the indweller of all. He alone is the controller of all; and it is He who duly dispenses the fruit of noble deeds and misdeeds of all. Hence He is the Ruler of all. Although He is so powerful, He is exceptionally subtle. He is the greatest of all great truths or principles and is ever present in all. That is why He is realized only by the most acute intellect of men of subtle vision. It is therefore that He is called subtler than the subtle. Even though so sublte, He is verily the support of the entire universe; it is He who holds, sustains and nourishes everything and everybody. Therefore, He is the sustainer of all. Though He permeates all, and is ever engaged in sustaining and nourishing all, He is nevertheless so far beyond all, and so transcendent in character, that the mind is utterly incapable of conceiving Him in reality. He is the original source of the power of conception possessed by the mind, and the power of ratiocination possessed by the intellect. They derive their vitality and activity from the life-current flowing from Him. He ever sees them, and sees all, and continues to energize them; but they cannot perceive Him. Hence He is beyond conception. Though inconceivable, He is all effulgence and ever lends radiance to all. Even as the sun is self-luminous, and illumines the whole universe by its light, so does that self-luminous supreme Being ever illumines all by His uninterrupted divine light of Knowledge. That is why He is spoken of as eternally shining like the sun. In Him who is an embodiment of such

transcendent, eternal and infinite Knowledge, the darkness of nescience or ignorance cannot even be conceived. Just as the sun has never witnessed darkness, even so He is ever wholly beyond the darkness of ignorance. Nay, even as the inky darkness of night is dispelled by the very twilight appearing before sunrise, so does the ignorance even of a man wholly engrossed in worldly enjoyments gets dissipated by the bright rays of His luminous Knowledge. It is therefore that He is said to be far beyond the darkness or ignorance. One should always remember such a God, who is the embodiment of pure existence, absolute knowledge and unmixed bliss.*

Although the present verse gives us to understand that God being inconceivable by nature the mind and intellect of man are unable to grasp Him, yet knowing Him as endowed with the marks mentioned in this verse we can certainly remember and contemplate on Him again and again; and such remembrance and contemplation alone enables us to realize Him in the end. It is therefore that mention has been made of the practice of God-remembrance, and it was but reasonable to do so.

Describing thus the supreme divine Puruṣa, the Lord now proceeds to tell us the mode of Sādhana and its reward.

प्रयाणकाले मनसाचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव।
भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ १० ॥

भक्त्या युक्तः full of devotion; **सः** he; **प्रयाणकाले** (even) at the hour of departure (from this world); **योगबलेन** by dint of Yoga; **भ्रुवोः मध्ये** in the space between the two eyebrows; **प्राणम्** the life-breath; **सम्यक्** firmly; **आवेश्य** holding; **च** then; **अचलेन मनसा** (contemplating on God) with an unshaken mind; **तम्** that; **दिव्यम्** divine; **परम्** supreme; **पुरुषम्** Being; **एव** verily; **उपैति** attains.

Having by the power of Yoga firmly held the life-breath in the space between the two eyebrows even at the time of death, and then contemplating on God with a steadfast mind, full of devotion, he reaches verily that supreme divine Puruṣa (God). (10)

Supreme love for God is called Bhakti or devotion.† 'Bhaktyā Yuktaḥ', therefore, means one who is possessed of such Love. 'Love' is a relative term which always presupposes an object. This shows that the form of discipline referred to here is not worship of the absolute, formless Brahma as identical with oneself, which is otherwise known as Jñānayoga (the discipline of knowledge), but Bhakti or devotion, which presupposes an object of worship other than the worshipper.

Abhyāsayoga or the Yoga of eight limbs, referred to in verse 8 above, is the

---

* The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* contains a Mantra which bears a close resemblance with this verse. It runs as follows:—

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात्।
तमेव विदित्वातिमृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय॥ (III.8)

"I know that great Being who is refulgent like the sun and far beyond the darkness of ignorance. It is only by knowing Him that one is able to transcend death; there is no other way to attain God".

† सा परानुरक्तिरीश्वरे। *(Sāṇḍilya-Sūtras, 2)*

Yoga spoken of in this verse. 'Power of Yoga', therefore, means control over the life-breath and the capacity to regulate its function according to will, acquired through the practice of such Yoga. In the space between the two eyebrows is located a spiritual centre which the authorities on Yoga call 'Ājñācakra'. It is described as consisting of two petals with a triangular Yoni. The spirits of fire, the sun and the moon join in this triangle. At the time of departure for what is known the great beyond, adepts in Yoga collect the five vital airs by the power of Yoga and lock them up once for all in this centre. It is not an easy task, a good deal of practice is required to hold the vital airs in the Ājñācakra in this way. There are seven sheaths in the vicinity of this Ājñācakra, which are known by the names of Indu, Bodhinī, Nāda, Ardhacandrikā, Mahānāda, Kalā (embodying the sun, moon and fire) and Unmanī. Reaching the Unmanī sheath through the vital airs, the Jīva realises the Supreme Puruṣa or God. There is no compulsory rebirth for him now. Either he does not take birth at all, or even if he does so he comes to this world of his own accord, or by the will of God, for the good of the world.

The process of this Sādhanā can be learnt only by direct instruction from a master who has practical knowledge of Yoga. None should make any attempt to practise it merely with the help of books; for such an attempt is calculated to do more harm than good.

With reference to mind the word 'Acala' has been used in the same sense here as 'Nānyagāmin, in verse 8 of this chapter. In other words, a mind which when one fixed on the object of meditation remains rooted there and does not deviate in the least is called 'Acala' (VI.19).

The supreme divine Puruṣa referred to in this verse is the same as has been described in verses 8 and 9 above.

Verse 5 made a brief reference to the destiny of an ordinary person who dies with the thought of God uppermost in his mind. Verses 8 and 10 then described the final state of Yogīs who meditate on the formless transcendent unmanifest aspect of God with attributes, known as Adhiyajña. And now, while devoting verses 11 to 13 to a description of the final state of Yogīs who worship the supreme indestructible absolute formless Brahma, the Lord first of all glorifies that Brahma and undertakes to speak about Him.

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं सङ्ग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥ ११ ॥

वेदविदः the knowers of the Veda; **यत्** which; **अक्षरम्** the Indestructible; **वदन्ति** term (as); **वीतरागाः** free from passion; **यतयः** striving recluses; **यत्** which; **विशन्ति** enter; **यत्** which; **इच्छन्तः** desiring; **ब्रह्मचर्यम्** celibacy; **चरन्ति** (they) practise; **तत्** that; **पदम्** (supreme) state; **ते** to you; **सङ्ग्रहेण** with brevity; **प्रवक्ष्ये** (I) shall speak of.

I shall tell you briefly about that supreme goal (viz., God who is an embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss), which the knowers of the Veda term as the Indestructible; which striving recluses free from passion enter, and desiring which the celibates practise Brahmacarya. (11)

That which imparts the knowledge of God is called the Veda. This Veda has been handed down to us in the form of the four Saṁhitās or collections of hymns and the

exegetic literature known as the Brāhmaṇas, such as Aitareya etc. The life and centre of the Veda is the supreme Brahma or Oversoul. He is the meaning of the Veda. The great men of wisdom who know this meaning and knowing it strive ceaselessly for its realization, and ultimately succeed in realizing it,—they alone are the true knowers of the Veda.

Only those great men of wisdom who are knowers of the Veda can speak something about that Brahma; no one else is entitled to do so. They tell us that Brahma is 'Indestructible'; in other words, it is that great Reality which never undergoes loss or diminution in any shape or form under any circumstance, and which ever remains immortal, absolute and unchanged. The Lord is speaking here of the same unmanifest Indestructible whose worship is mentioned in XII.3.

The word 'Yatayaḥ' here refers to those recluses who are men of strong dispassion qualified for God-realization, established in Brahma and possessed of spiritual qualifications of high order.

The word 'Viśanti' (enter) in this verse has not been used in the sense that we speak of entering a house or apartment from without. It denotes the process of identification, which represents the climax of Sādhana. Brahma or God, being our own self, is ever present with us. Our error or misconception lies in mistaking that which is already attained as something unattained. The removal of this misconception or ignorance is what is meant by entering in God.

Etymologically speaking, 'Brahmacarya' means to live and move in Brahma, or to walk in the path leading to Brahma, i.e., to follow practices which may enable one to advance on the Godward path. It is such practices that are termed as the rule of conduct laid down for a 'Brahmacārī',* and which form part of the obligatory duties attaching to the stage of Brahmacarya. or student life, and must be followed by all Sādhakas to the best of their ability and according to their own circumstances.

The basic principle of Brahmacarya is conservation and purification of the generative fluid. This greatly helps God-realization through the eradication of desires. The semen of those who have taken a vow of perpetual celibacy and have turned its flow upwards does not take a downward course under any circumstance whatsoever; that is why they advance easily on the path leading to God-realization. At a lower rung of the ladder stand those whose generative fluid does have a downward flow, but who manage to conserve it by wholly abstaining from sexual indulgence in thought, word and deed. This too is tantamount to Brahmacarya. With reference to this latter the *Garuḍa-Purāṇa* says:—

"Abstaining from sex-indulgence in thought, word and deed everywhere, at every time and under all circumstances is called Brahmacarya."†

The institution of Āśramas too has God-realization for its object. Brahmacarya is the first of the four Āśramas. It is incumbent on those who belong to this Āśrama to observe the rules of Brahmacarya with scrupulous care. It is therefore that the Lord says, "Desirous of attaining Brahma the celibates practise Brahmacarya."

The Lord undertakes in this verse to tell Arjuna something about the supreme Brahma or Oversoul referred to above, viz., "who that Brahma is, and through what kind of practice followed at the time of death can one realize Him."‡

* Vide commentary on VI.14

† कर्मणा मनसा वाचा सर्वावस्थासु सर्वदा। सर्वत्र मैथुनत्यागो ब्रह्मचर्यं प्रचक्ष्यते॥ (238.6)

‡ The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* also contains a Mantra which is analogous to the above verse:—

The next two verses actually describe what the preceding verse promised to tell.

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च।
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम्॥ १२॥
ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन्।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम्॥ १३॥

सर्वद्वाराणि all the doors (of the senses); संयम्य having closed; च and; मनः the Mind; हृदि within (the cavity of) the heart; निरुध्य firmly holding; प्राणम् the life-breath; मूर्ध्नि in the head; आधाय fixing; आत्मनः योगधारणाम् Yogic concentration on God; आस्थितः remaining steadfast in; यः who; ओम् Om (the sacred Praṇava or ever new appellation of God); इति this; एकाक्षरम् ब्रह्म the one indestructible Brahma (God); व्याहरन् uttering; माम् Me (the Absolute); अनुस्मरन् meditating on; देहम् the body; त्यजन् leaving; प्रयाति departs (from this world); सः he; परमाम् गतिम् the highest goal; याति reaches.

Having closed all the doors of the senses, and firmly holding the mind in the cavity of the heart, and then fixing the life-breath in the head, and thus remaining steadfast in Yogic concentration on God, he who leaves the body and departs uttering the one indestructible Brahma, Om, and dwelling on Me in My absolute aspect, reaches the supreme goal. (12-13)

The five senses of perception, viz., the sense of hearing etc., and the five organs of action, such as the organ of speech etc.—these are the ten media for contacting worldly objects; hence they are termed as doors. Besides these, the different centres in the body which are the seats of these senses and organs are also called doors. Withdrawing these from external object, that is, suspending all their functions such as hearing etc., and at the same time controlling all their seats, the senses should be turned inwards. This is what is meant by closing the doors of the senses. The process is known as Pratyāhāra in the terminology of Yoga.

Situated between the navel and the throat, the heart has been compared to a lotus, and is supposed to be the seat of the mind and the vital airs. Emptied of all thoughts, the ever-wandering mind is confined within the region of the heart. The process is described in the verse as 'fixing the mind in the heart.'

After fixing the mind in the heart, the vital airs have to be raised upwards through an ascending nerve, and placed in the head. In course of this process the mind too follows the breath, and gets fixed in the head. This very process is termed in the Science of Yoga as 'Dhāraṇā'.

Restraining the senses as laid down above, and fixing the mind and the vital airs firmly in the head is the same as remaining steadfast in Yogic concentration. The use of the word 'Atmanaḥ' before 'Yogadhāraṇām' is intended to convey that the mind has to

---

सर्वे वेदा यत्पदमामनन्ति तपाꣳसि सर्वाणि च यद्वदन्ति ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीम्योमित्येतत्॥ (I.ii.15)

"I shall briefly tell you about the goal which all the Vedas proclaim, nay, which all austerities are declared as leading to, and seeking which celibates observe the vow of Brahmacarya, Om is the word for that state".

be concentrated on God, and not on any other deity or Nature.

The word Om is an appellation of the indestructible supreme Reality or God, who is one without a second; and the name and the object named being recognized as essentially one, it is quite in the fitness of things to speak of Om as the one 'indestructible syllable' and also as Brahma *(vide. X.25)*. The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* also says:—

"This indestructible syllable is Brahma, this indestructible syllable is the supreme. Knowing this very syllable man is able to attain whatever he may like to have."*

It may be asked here: How can it be possible for one to utter the word Om when all the senses, including the organ of speech as well as the mind have been restrained and the vital airs have been fixed in the head ? Our answer to this is that the verse does not insist on vocal utterance. Utterance here means utterance by the mind.

As the verse refers to the last moments of the Yogī who follows the path of Knowledge, the word 'Mām' here stands for the absolute formless Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. Just as by declaring in verse 4 that He Himself is Adhiyajña in this body, the Lord has shown His identity with the Adhiyajña aspect of God, even so He has used the word 'Mām' in this context to bring out His identity with Brahma.

One should not wonder here how to carry on together the mental repetition of Om as well as meditation on Brahma, the meaning of Om. For it is certainly within the power of the mind to carry on both the practices together. It is a common experience that even though externally engaged in a particular activity, people are mentally busy with other thoughts as well besides those pertaining to the work in hand. There are very few people who when externally engaged in a particular action uninterruptedly think of nothing else than the action itself. Nay, often it so happens that though externally speaking or doing one thing man is revolving just the opposite thing in his mind side by side with the thought of his external occupation. When one experiences no difficulty in this, why should there be any difficulty in carrying on in a lonely place mental repetition of the appellation of God, viz., Om, side by side with meditation on God Himself ? Mental repetition of the Name should, on the other hand, prove helpful in fixing one's thought on the object named. The great sage Patañjali too says that till the stage of what is called Savikalpa Samādhi the distinction of word, its meaning and the consciousness of its meaning persists in the mind *(vide Yoga Sūtras* I.41). Hence it is but natural that a thought of the name of the object meditated upon should exist in the mind side by side with that of the object itself. Patañjali says:—"The sacred syllable OM (also called Praṇava) is the name of God. Repetition of this Name and meditation on the object signified by it, viz., God should be carried on together." (तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः। तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम्। Ibid, II.27-58).

Realization of the absolute, formless Brahma as identical with oneself is what is meant by 'reaching the supreme goal, in this verse. Lasting freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, attainment of liberation or Mokṣa and realization of 'Nirvāṇa Brahma' are only different names for this supreme state.

In verses 8 to 10 above the object of worship, viz., the supreme Puruṣa, has been described as omniscient, the ruler and sustainer of all, and self-luminous like the sun. All these are divine attributes of the all-pervading

* एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं परम्। एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत्॥ (I.ii.16)

God. Verses 11 to 13, however, mention no such attribute as may present any difficulty in treating them as dealing with the absolute, formless Brahma. Moreover, in the former verses the worshipper has been characterized as 'full of devotion', which indicates that the mode of worship referred to therein is the one in which the worshipper and the object of worship are held as different, and realization of the supreme divine Puruṣa or God with attributes has been declared to be the reward of his worship. In these verses, however, the subject of discussion being the mode of worship in which the worshipper and the worshipped are one, no such qualification has been used with reference to the worshipper, and attainment of the supreme goal (absolute Brahma) has been declared to be the fruit of his worship. Over and above this, verse 11 also undertakes to broach a new subject. At the same time, if all the six verses are treated as dealing with one subject, the references to Yoga contained in them should have to be regarded as suffering from the defect of repetition. All these arguments seem to establish conclusively that the six verses referred to above deal with two subjects and not one.

The modes of practice followed at the hour of death by the Yogīs who worship the formless God with attributes and the absolute formless Brahma respectively have been thus described with their fruits; but such practice during the last moments can be followed only by those who have brought their mind under control through previous practice of Yoga. For an ordinary man it is most difficult to fix the mind as laid down above at the last moment either on the unmanifest Divinity with attributes, or on the absolute formless Brahma. Under such circumstances one is naturally led to enquire an easy way to God-realizaiton. To this the Lord now replies that constant and uninterrupted thought of God is an easy way to His realization.

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ १४ ॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; यः who; अनन्यचेताः not thinking of any one else; नित्यशः always; सततम् continuously; माम् Me (the supreme Person); स्मरति thinks of; नित्ययुक्तस्य ever absorbed in Me; तस्य योगिनः to that Yogī; अहम् I (am); सुलभः easily attainable.

Arjuna, whosoever always and constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind, to that Yogī ever absorbed in Me I am easily attainable. (14)

He whose mind having lost all attraction for everything else remains constantly and lovingly attached to God alone, who is the repository of supreme Love, is one who is said to be possessed of 'an undivided mind'. The word 'Satatam' indicates that remembrance of God should go on uninterruptedly without even a moment's break; and the word 'Nityaśaḥ' shows that such uninterrupted remembrance should be carried on throughout one's life without a day's respite.

The verse speaks of constant remembrance of God with a heart full of love, and contains expressions like 'I' and 'he' which are indicative of distinction between the worshipper and the object of worship. Therefore, the word 'Mām' or 'Me' used in it stands for Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, who is an embodiment of Divinity with attributes. And even so remembrance here consists in

constantly and repeatedly dwelling on a mental image of His divine form or on His divine names, virtues, glory and sports etc.

When the love-intoxicated devotee who remembers the Lord with exclusive devotion can no longer bear his separation from Him, the Lord too begins to feel His separation from the devotee unbearable. For His vow is: "However men approach Me, even so do I seek them." (IV.11) And when God Himself longs to meet the devotee, who can stand in His way ? That is why the verse says that God is easily attainable by such a devotee.

But the question is, "Is it an easy thing to be in constant thought of the Lord at all times ?" Our answer to this question is that for one who is possessed of reverence and love for God and the God-realized saints, and who firmly believes that by constantly remembering God at all times one can easily attain Him, it is no doubt easy to be in constant thought of the Lord through His grace. But it is certainly difficult for one who lacks faith and love, who has no knowledge of God's virtues and glory, and who does not enjoy the privilege of being in touch with a God-realized saint.

By declaring in the next verse that God-realized souls are never born again, the Lord now reveals that a God-realized saint is never disunited from God.

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम्।
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥ १५ ॥

परमाम् संसिद्धिम् the highest perfection; **गताः** having attained; **महात्मानः** great souls; **माम्** Me; **उपेत्य** having come to; **दुःखालयम्** the abode of sorrow; **अशाश्वतम्** transitory; **पुनर्जन्म** rebirth; **न** not; **आप्नुवन्ति** are subjected to.

Great souls, who have attained the highest perfection, having come to Me, are no more subjected to rebirth, which is the abode of sorrow, and transient by nature. (15)

Through constant practice of adoration and meditation carried on with utmost faith and love when the Sādhaka reaches the climax of Sādhanā, after attaining which no Sādhanā remains to be done, and the Sādhaka immediately obtains direct perception of God, he is said to have reached the 'highest perfection.' And the term 'Mahātmānaḥ' (great souls) has been used with reference to those enlightened devotees who have reached this state of perfection.

The transmigration of an individual soul from one species of life to another, under the impulse of Karma, cannot cease till he has attained God. This transmigration of a soul under the impulse of Karma is called rebirth. And there is no species of life whatsoever which is not full of sorrow and transient. Death itself is a proof positive of the transitoriness of life, but even of such objects with which we come in contact during our life, there is none which ever remains the same, and contact with which may last for ever. That which appears agreeable today becomes disagreeable tomorrow when its present form undergoes some change, or when our mental attitude towards the same is changed. Even that which man regards as positively conducive to happiness in life becomes a source of sorrow when either it ceases to be, or when he himself is forced to part with it. Besides this, the sense of imperfection attaching to all objects and states of existence and the

fear of destruction attending upon them all is a perennial source of pain. Sins committed through attachment in the course of accumulation and enjoyment of objects which appear delightful also lead to various forms of suffering and tortures in hell. Rebirth being thus full of sorrow and sorrow alone from the time of entering the womb till death, it has been characterized as the abode of sorrow; and contact with the various species of life and the enjoyments obtained therein being transient, it has been further described as transitory by nature.

The great souls referred to above are no more subjected to rebirth only because those devotees, possessed of exclusive love for God, succeed in realizing Him. The rule is that he who is once able to realize God, who is an endless ocean of all joys and the supreme support and asylum of all, and who is also called the Supreme Spirit or the Supreme Person, is never and under no circumstance disunited from Him. That is why the Lord says that after God-realization one is no more subjected to rebirth.

The statement that great souls who have realized God are never reborn indicates that other souls are subject to rebirth. Therefore, one is naturally tempted to enquire up to what limit Jīvas are compelled to return even after reaching it. In reply to this, the Lord says:—

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन।
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते॥ १६॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; आब्रह्मभुवनात् from the heavenly realm of Brahmā (the Creator) downwards; लोकाः (all) the worlds; पुनरावर्तिनः (are) liable to appear and reappear; तु but; कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī; माम् Me; उपेत्य reaching; पुनर्जन्म rebirth; न not; विद्यते there is.

Arjuna, all the worlds from Brahmaloka (the heavenly realm of the Creator, Brahmā) downwards are liable to appear and reappear. But, O son of Kuntī, on attaining Me there is no rebirth. (For while I am beyond Time, regions like Brahmaloka, being conditioned by time, are transitory.) (16)

Brahmā is the name of the fourfaced deity who taking his birth from the lotus in the navel of God, at the beginning of creation brings forth the entire universe. He is known as prajāpati, Hiraṇyagarbha and Sūtrātmā as well. It is he who has been referred to as the 'Adhidaiva' in verse 4 of this chapter. The heavenly region where he has his abode and which forms the uppermost limit of this material universe is known as the 'Brahmaloka' or 'Brahmabhuvana'. The word 'Lokāḥ' covers all the divisions of the universe, higher as well as lower, such as Bhūḥ' Bhuvaḥ, Svaḥ, Atala, Vitala and so on, which are presided over by so many celestial regents or guardians known as Lokapālas.

Worlds which are by their very nature liable to disappear with the dissolution of the universe and to appear again at the beginning of every creation, and the inhabitants of which are subject to rebirth, are called 'punarāvartinaḥ'.

The statement that all the worlds from Brahmaloka downwards ae liable to appear and disappear raises the question: What is it that renders them liable to appearance and disappearance ? Anticipating this question the Lord now proceeds to establish the transitory nature of all the worlds by stating the duration of Brahmā's day and night.

सहस्त्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः।
रात्रिं युगसहस्त्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ १७ ॥

ब्रह्मण: of Brahmā (the Creator); यत् (that) which; अह: (is) the day; सहस्त्रयुगपर्यन्तम् as covering a thousand Mahāyugas; रात्रिम् (and so his) night; युगसहस्त्रान्ताम् as extending to a thousand Mahāyugas; विदु: (who) know (from realization); ते जना: those Yogīs; अहोरात्रविद: (are) knowers of (the reality about) Time.

Those Yogīs who know from realization Brahmā's day as covering a thousand Mahāyugas, and so his night as extending to another thousand Mahāyugas, know the reality about Time. (17)

The word 'Yuga' in this verse stands for a 'celestial Yuga', which consists of one set of the four earthly Yugas, viz., Satyayuga, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. The measure of time of the celestial is reckoned as 360 times longer than the measure obtaining on the earth. In other words, a day and night of twenty-four hours of the celestials is equivalent to one terrestrial year; one celestial month consists of thirty earthly years, and three hundred and sixty earthly years constitute one celestial year. Twelve thousand such celestial years go to form a 'celestial Yuga'. It is also called a 'Mahāyuga' or 'Caturyugī' which consists of 12000x360 or 43,20,000 human years. According to the celestial measure, every Kaliyuga extends to twelve hundred years, every Dvāpara consists of two thousand four hundred years, each Tretā lasts for three thousand six hundred years, and each Satyayuga runs for four thousand eight hundred years. The aggregate of these four Yugas comes to 12,000 years. This constitutes a celestial Yuga. Thousand such celestial Yugas go to make a day of Brahmā, and the same number of Yugas constitute his night. Reckoned in human years the duration of the different Yugas is as follows:—

Kaliyuga—1200x360 or 4,32,000 years

Dvāpara—2400x360 or 8,64,000 years
(Twice as much as Kaliyuga)

Tretā—3600x360 or 12,96,000 years
(Three times as much as Kaliyuga)

Satyayuga—4800x360 or 17,28,000 years
(Four times as much as Kaliyuga)

Total—12000x360 or 43,20,000 years.

The above figure represents one celestial Yuga. Thousand such celestial Yugas or 4,32,00,00,000 human years go to make a day of Brahmā, and his night also is of the same length. The subject has been fully dealt with in verses 64 to 73 of chapter I of *Manusmṛti* (the Code of Manu). The day of Brahmā is known as a 'Kalpa' (cycle) or 'Sarga' (the period of creation) and the night as 'Pralaya' or dissolution. Thirty rounds of such days and nights taken together make one Brahmic month, twelve such months make one Brahmic year, and hundred such years constitute the span of Brahmā's life. By stating the duration of Brahmā's day and night the Lord indicates that even Brahmā's life and abode are thus finite and limited by time; hence they are also transient. When such is the case with the life and abode of Brahmā, there is no wonder that the worlds lower than the Brahmaloka and the bodies of beings inhabiting them should be transient.

Having come to know the duration of Brahmā's day and night, man becomes cognizant of the transitory character of Brahmaloka as well as of all the worlds enclosed within its circle. He then comes to realize that when the worlds themselves are transitory, the enjoyments obtained therein should be much more fleeting and perishable. And that which is transitory and perishable can never bring lasting happiness. Therefore, it is the height of folly to get attached to enjoyments of this world and the next and strive to obtain them, and to fritter away the human existence by indulging in frivolities. The span of a man's life is very short. Therefore wisdom lies in devoting oneself to the remembrance of God with a heart full of love, and realizing Him at the earliest moment, wherein lies the fruition of human existence. And he alone who realizes this knows the truth about Time in the form of day and night, and makes the best use of his valuable time.

Showing thus the length of Brahmā's day and night, the Lord now tells us of the repeated appearance of all embodied beings at the coming of each such day and of their dissolution at each such nightfall, thereby revealing their transitory character.

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तय: सर्वा: प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे।
रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसञ्ज्ञके ॥ १८ ॥

सर्वा: all; **व्यक्तय:** embodied beings (both sentient and insentient); **अहरागमे** at the coming of the cosmic day; **अव्यक्तात्** from the Unmanifest (i.e., Brahmā's subtle body); **प्रभवन्ति** emanate; **रात्र्यागमे** (and) at the cosmic nightfall; **तत्र अव्यक्तसञ्ज्ञके** into that subtle body of Brahmā, known as the Unmanifest; **एव** alone; **प्रलीयन्ते** merge.

All embodied beings emanate from the Unmanifest (i.e., Brahmā's subtle body) at the coming of the cosmic day; at the cosmic nightfall they merge into the same subtle body of Brahmā, known as the Unmanifest. (18)

The word 'Vyakti' stands for that which is perceived by the mind and senses. All embodied beings can be so perceived. Therefore, the word 'Vyaktayaḥ' qualified by the adjective 'Sarvāḥ' denotes all embodied beings that are manifest, no matter whether they are gods, human beings, manes, beasts, birds or any other creatures.

The word 'Avyakta' (Unmanifest) here refers to the lower Prakṛti of God in its subtle state, also known as the subtle body of Brahmā, that is the state anterior to the evolution of the five gross elements.

At the commencement of Brahmā's day, that is to say, when Brahmā emerges from the state of deep sleep and enters the waking life, there appears a change in the subtle state of Prakṛti, which assumes a gross form, and all embodied beings become connected in different ways with that gross form of Prakṛti according to their respective Karma. This is what has been spoken of in this verse as the emanation of all embodied beings from the unmanifest.

At the end of a thousand celestial Yugas, when Brahmā passes from the awakened state to a state of deep sleep, that marks the commencement of the cosmic night. At that time Prakṛti gives up its gross form and reverts to the subtle state and all embodied beings, being deprived of their gross bodies, get embedded into the subtle

state of Prakṛti. This is what is meant by the merging of all embodied beings in the subtle body of Brahmā, known as the Unmanifest. The soul itself, being unborn and imperishable, does not in reality go through the process of emanation and dissolution. Therefore, the emanation of beings in this context should be construed to mean the crystallization of the subtle element of Prakṛti, connected with the beings rooted in Prakṛti, into the gross form, and their dissolution should be taken to mean the melting of the gross forms back into the subtle state.

The 'Unmanifest' referred to in this verse as the subtle state of Prakṛti or Matter is essentially the same as the Prakṛti mentioned in verses 7 and 8 of Chapter IX. Only they represent two different phases of the same substance. In other words, the 'Unmanifest' mentioned in this verse stands for the 'Aparā' or lower Prakṛti which has been shown in VII.4 as eightfold divided. Verses 7 and 8 of Chapter IX, on the other hand, speak of Prakṛti or Matter in its primordial and indescribable state prior to its division into eight forms. The same primordial Prakṛti, when it passes from the causal to the subtle state, comes to be known as the 'Aparā' or lower Prakṛti with its eight divisions.

Even though at the commencement of Brahmā's night all beings get dissolved into the Unmanifest, they do not attain immunity from rebirth till they succeed in realizing God, and continue to revolve in the whirligig of births and deaths. In order to show this, the Lord says:—

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।
रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ १९ ॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; सः एव अयम् this selfsame; भूतग्रामः multitude of beings; भूत्वा भूत्वा emanating again and again; अवशः under compulsion of its nature; रात्र्यागमे at the coming of the cosmic night; प्रलीयते is dissolved; अहरागमे (and) at the commencement of the cosmic day; प्रभवति rises (again).

Arjuna, this multitude of beings, being born again and again, is dissolved under compulsion of its nature at the coming of the cosmic night, and rises again at the commencement of the cosmic day. (19)

The word 'Bhūtagrāmaḥ' in this verse stands for living beings in general including both sentient and insentient creatures. The qualifying words 'Saḥ', 'Eva' and 'Ayam' used with reference to the same show that the selfsame beings who merge in the Unmanifest at the cosmic nightfall, and who have been referred to in the preceding verse as 'Sarvāḥ Vyaktayaḥ', rise again at the cosmic dawn. Their merging into the Unmanifest neither brings them liberation nor does it bring about the cessation of their separate existence. That is why immediately after the period of the cosmic night ends, they all manifest themselves, obtaining physical bodies suited to their respective qualities and karmas. The Lord says that the multitude of beings, both sentient and insentient, which thus repeatedly merges into the Unmanifest and then emanates from it again and again, and which is directly visible to us is ever the same; it has not newly appeared.

By using the word 'Bhūtvā' twice in

the verse, the Lord shows that the processes of emanation of beings from the Unmanifest and their merging into the same have gone on repeatedly from time without beginning. Even on the completion of Brahmā's life of a hundred years reckoned according to his measure, when the gross body of Brahmā too gets dissolved into primordial Prakṛti, and along with him all embodied beings also merge into the same, this circuit of their appearance and disappearance does not come to an end. They continue to appear and disappear even after that (IX.8). So long as an embodied being does not realize God, he will thus continue to emanate from Prakṛti and merge into her again and again.

The adjective 'Avaśaḥ' qualifies 'Bhūtagrāmaḥ'. He who is subject to another, and is not free, is said to be 'Avaśaḥ'. All embodied beings emanating from the Unmanifest and again merging into the Unmanifest are subject to their own individual nature, which is a product of their respective traits and karmas existing from time without beginning. Being subject to such nature, each being is compelled to undergo repeated births and deaths. That is why in XIII.21 the Lord says that it is the soul bound by Prakṛti who enjoys the guṇas born of Prakṛti in the form of pleasure and pain, and that it is his association with Prakṛti which is responsible for his birth in higher and lower species. This makes it clear that the soul who reaching beyond the realm of Prakṛti succeeds in realizing God does not take birth again.

It may be asked here: Who is it that ordains with due precision and care the repeated birth of all embodied beings according to their respective traits and karma: is it Prakṛti, God Himself or Brahmā (the Creator) ? Our answer to this question is that there being reference to the day and night of Brahmā in this as well as in the preceding verses, it is to be understood that it is Brahmā himself who brings forth beings again and again clothing them with forms appropriate to their respective traits and karmas. At the end of the final dissolution, when Brahmā has not yet come into being, the act of creation is done by God Himself; but after the birth of a new Brahmā, the function of creation is carried on by him alone.

The process of creation described in verses 7 to 10 of Chapter IX and again in verses 3 to 4 of Chapter XIV has reference to the very first creation after the Final Dissolution, whereas the process described in these verses refers to the creation at the commencement of a day of Brahmā and on the termination of a Brahmic night.

The question now is: Is this Unmanifest, to which all beings return at the commencement of a Brahmic night, and from which again they emanate at the beginning of a Brahmic day, the highest truth or state ? Or is there anything higher than this ? In reply to this possible query, the Lord says:—

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ २० ॥

तस्मात् अव्यक्तात् than this Unmanifest; **तु** even; **परः** much higher; **अन्यः** yet another (of a heterogeneous character); **यः** which; **सनातनः** eternal; **अव्यक्तः भावः** unmanifest Existence (there is); **सः** that (supreme divine Person); **सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु** with the destruction of all beings; **न** not; **विनश्यति** perishes.

Far beyond even this Unmanifest, there is yet another unmanifest Existence, that Supreme Divine Person, who does not perish even though all beings perish. (20)

The word 'Avyaktāt' taken together with the demonstrative adjective 'Tasmāt', in this verse, refers to the Unmanifest mentioned in verse 18 above, in which all embodied beings merge during a Brahmic night. Another unmanifest Existence or Substance, distinct from this, is the one spoken of in verse 4 of this chapter as 'Adhiyajña', in verse 9 as the 'allwise eternal Being' etc., in verse 10 as the supreme Divine Person, in verse 22 as the 'Supreme Person', and in IX.4 as the 'Unmanifest aspect' of God. By calling this latter as 'higher' than and 'different' from the former, the Lord establishes its decided superiority to and diversity from the former Unmanifest. That is to say, though both these substances are 'Unmanifest', they are not of the same class or category. While the former is insentient, perishable and objective, this latter 'Unmanifest' is the sentient, imperishable subject. Besides, the latter Unmanifest is the Lord, Controller and Supervisor of the former, and therefore much superior to, and altogether different from the same. It has been called 'eternal' inasmuch as it has no beginning or end.

'All beings' in this verse stands for the whole multitude of embodied beings, both sentient and insentient, who appear during Brahmā's day and disappear during his night, including their mind, senses, bodies, objects of enjoyment and abodes, etc. The absorption of these beings, divested of their gross and subtle bodies, into the primordial Prakṛti, or undifferentiated Māyā, during the Final Dissolution is what has been spoken of here as their destrution. Even at that time the supreme Divine Puruṣa or God, who is the supervisor of that Prakṛti, and has been referred to here as the eternal Unmanifest, exists in His own glory, absorbing within Himself all those beings together with Prakṛti itself. This is what is meant by the statement that "this eternal Unmanifest does not perish, even though all beings perish."

Verses 8 and 10 declare realization of the supreme Divine Puruṣa as the fruit of worship of the Adhiyajña aspect of God; verse 13 similarly pronounces attainment of the supreme goal as the reward of worship of the supreme indestructible Absolute; whereas verse 14 holds out God-realization as the boon obtainable from the worship of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa or God with form and attributes. In order that the above three states of realization may not be misconstrued as distinct from one another, the Lord while declaring their oneness shows that after their realization there is no rebirth.

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम्।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ २१ ॥

अव्यक्तः the Unmanifest (which); **अक्षरः इति** as the Indestructible; **उक्तः** has been spoken of; **तम्** that; **परमाम् गतिम्** the supreme Goal; **आहुः** (they) call; **यम्** (and) which (eternal Unmanifest); **प्राप्य** attaining; **न** not; **निवर्तन्ते** they return (to this mortal world); **तत्** that (is); **मम** My; **परमम्** supreme; **धाम** Abode or State.

The same Unmanifest which has been spoken of as the Indestructible is also called the supreme Goal; that again is My supreme Abode, attaining which they return not to this mortal world. (21)

The words 'Unmanifest' and 'Indestructible', in this verse, stand for the same 'Adhiyajña' who has been referred to as the 'eternal Unmanifest' in the preceding verse, and as the 'supreme Divine Puruṣa' in verse 10 of this chapter.

The words 'supreme Goal' denote the state of liberation or final beatitude, which is the highest object worth attaining, the attainment of which leaves nothing to be attained, and which brings the total cessation of all forms of suffering as soon as it is attained. Therefore, 'supreme Goal' stands here for the absolute formless Divinity, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, who is spoken of as the 'supreme Indestructible'. (Ch. VIII.13).

The eternal Abode of God, being all truth, all knowledge and all bliss, and also divine and sentient in character, is in reality identical with God. Therefore, the 'supreme Abode' mentioned in this verse stands for the Lord's eternal Abode, His very being and His divine state. That is to say, there is no difference in reality between the attainment of the eternal Abode of God, of the divine state and of God Himself. Similarly, there is no real difference between the attainment of the indestructible Unmanifest, of the supreme Goal and of God. Diversity of fruit exists only in the eyes of the Sādhakas following different courses of discipline. It is therefore that the fruit has been called by different names. There being no essential difference between the various fruits, they have been shown as identical in the present verse.

Showing thus the identity of the eternal Unmanifest with the supreme Goal and the supreme Abode, the Lord now proceeds to tell us the means of attaining that eternal unmanifest supreme Puruṣa.

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया।
यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्॥ २२॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; यस्य अन्तःस्थानि residing in whom; भूतानि (are all) beings; येन (and) by whom; इदम सर्वम् all this; ततम् (is) pervaded; सः that; परः पुरुषः (eternal unmanifest) supreme Puruṣa; तु indeed; अनन्यया भक्त्या (only) through exclusive Devotion; लभ्यः (is) attainable.

Arjuna, that eternal unmanifest supreme Puruṣa in whom all beings reside, and by whom all this is pervaded, is attainable only through exclusive Devotion. (22)

Just as the four elements of air, fire, water and earth are part and parcel of ether, which is their sole cause and substratum, even so the entire creation consisting of sentient and insentient beings is part and parcel of God, has emanated from God and on God alone does it rest. This is what is meant by the statement that all beings reside in the supreme Puruṣa. Similarly, the statement that 'all this is pervaded by the supreme Puruṣa' should be understood to mean that just as air, fire, water and earth are all pervaded by ether, even so the entire creation is pervaded by God. This very idea

has been elaborated in verses 4, 5 and 6 of Chapter IX.

The 'supreme Puruṣa' mentioned in this verse stands for the all-pervading 'Adhiyajña' aspect of God. The formless God with attributes, whose worship has been discussed in verses 8, 9 and 10 of this chapter, and the eternal Unmanifest referred to in verse 20 are just the same as this 'Adhiyajña'. It is in this aspect of God that all beings are said to reside, and it is by Him alone that all beings are spoken of as pervaded.

Although the worship of this unmanifest Puruṣa has already been discussed in verses 8 to 10 above, it will be seen that there is some difference between the subject matter of those verses and that of the present verse. Whereas the above verses merely deal with the practice attained by Yogīs at the hour of death with its reward, the present verse speaks of exclusive devotion which can be practised at all times by all kinds of people, and of the realizaiton of God through such practice. It is in order to deal with this latter aspect of devotion that the subject of that worship has been taken up again for discussion in the present verse.

Exclusive devotion consists in surrendering everything to the almighty God, who sustains all and is the inner witness of all, remaining supremely contented at all times with His dispensation, and constantly thinking of Him with undivided love in every way. Realizing the virtues, nature and essence of God through such exclusive Devotion, the Sādhaka gets absorbed in the object of his worship and speedily attains the object of his existence by directly perceiving Him. This is what is meant by realizing God through exclusive devotion.

In the course of His answer to the seventh question of Arjuna, the Lord clearly explained how man realizes God at the last moment of his life. Incidentally He also mentioned that without God-realization there is no escape for the Jīva from the round of births and deaths even though he may ascend even up to Brahmaloka. But with regard to those who reach the state from which there is no return, the Lord did not mention in that connection as to how and by which path they go. Even so with regard to those who pass on to a state from which they have to return, the route by which they travel was not mentioned. The Lord, therefore, now introduces the two paths in the next verse.

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः।
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥ २३ ॥

तु and; भरतर्षभ O best of Bharatas, Arjuna; यत्र काले at which time; प्रयाताः having departed (from this world); योगिनः the Yogīs; अनावृत्तिम् the state of non-return; च and; आवृत्तिम् the state from which they have to return; एव alone; यान्ति attain; तम् कालम् that time, i.e., the two respective paths; वक्ष्यामि I shall describe.

Arjuna, I shall now tell you the time (path) departing when Yogīs do not return, and also the time (path) departing when they do return. (23)

The word 'Kāla' (time) here stands for the path on which the deities presiding over the different periods of time exercise their authority within their respective limits. That

which has been spoken of as 'Kāla' in this verse has been referred to as the 'bright' and the 'dark' paths in the twenty-sixth, and as the two Sṛtis (paths) in verse 27. Besides, the words 'Agniḥ', 'Jyotiḥ' and 'Dhūmaḥ' too do not represent divisions of time. Therefore, it will not be correct to interpret the word 'Tatra', appearing in verses 24 and 25, as referring to 'time' and it is quite in order to construe 'Kāla' in the sense of a path falling within the jurisdiction of the deities presiding over the different periods of time.

Here it may be asked: When such is the case, why do people consider it auspicious for the deceased if one dies during the bright fortnight and when the sun takes a northerly course ? Our answer to this question is that in a sense the popular belief referred to above is also correct; for death during those periods brings the soul immediately in contact with the deities presiding over them. Therefore, a soul departing from this world during those periods reaches his destination easily and quickly. But this should not lead one to conclude that an individual departing at night, or during the dark fortnight, or when the sun takes a southerly course, does not proceed along the bright path or Arcimārga as it is called in the Upaniṣads. In this connection it should be understood that a departing soul will take that very path by which he is to travel, irrespective of the time of death. Of course, it is true that if a soul qualified to traverse the bright path dies during the night, his contact with the deity presiding over the day-time will be established only at daybreak, and meanwhile he will remain in the charge of the resplendent fire-god. Even so, if he dies during the dark fortnight, his contact with the deity presiding over the bright fortnight will be established only when the bright fortnight commences, and till then he will remain in the charge of the deity presiding over the day-time. In the same way, if he departs during the southerly course of the sun, his contact with the deity presiding over the northerly course will be established when the sun actually takes a northerly direction, and in the meantime he will remain in the charge of the deity presiding over the bright fortnight *Mutatis-mutandis* the same rule applies in the case of those who are qualified to travel by the southern path.

The use of the word 'Yoginaḥ' (Yogīs) in this verse shows that it does not speak of the transmigration of ordinary mortals who migrate from one species to another in this very world or proceed to hell. The description, contained in this as well as in the following verses, of the 'bright' and the 'dark' paths is a description of the migration of only superior types of men who are devoted to worship of God, or to such noble pursuits as the performance of sacrifices, charity and austerity etc.

The prefix 'Pra' before 'Yātāḥ' is intended to indicate the departure of souls proceeding to the higher worlds. By using the word 'Vakṣyāmi', the Lord undertakes to reveal to Arjuna the difference between the two paths, one leading to the regions from which one has to return and the other leading to a state of non-return, the names by which the two paths are known, and the deities who preside over them.

Of the two paths which the foregoing verse undertook to describe, the Lord now proceeds to speak of the one leading to the state from which there is no return.

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम्।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥ २४ ॥

ज्योतिः अग्निः the fire-god, who is all-effulgence; अहः the deity presiding over day-light; शुक्लः the deity presiding over the bright fortnight; षण्मासाः उत्तरायणम् the deity presiding over the six months of the northward course of the sun; तत्र by that path (which is presided over by all the aforesaid deities); प्रयाताः departed; ब्रह्मविदः जनाः the Yogīs who have known Brahma; ब्रह्म God; गच्छन्ति reach.

(Of the two paths) the one is that in which are stationed the all-effulgent fire-god and the deities presiding over daylight, the bright fortnight, and the six months of the northward course of the sun respectively; proceeding along it after death Yogīs, who have known Brahma, being successively led by the above gods, finally reach Brahma. (24)

The word 'Jyotiḥ' (effulgence) is a qualification of 'Agniḥ', which stands for the god of fire. The Upaniṣads speak of this god by the name of 'Arciḥ', which is a synonym of 'Jyotiḥ'. The god of fire is all effulgence of an ethereal character; his jurisdiction extends over the whole terrestrial globe including the ocean, and his function is to bring the soul qualified to travel by the path following the northerly course of the sun in contact with the deity presiding over daylight. If such a soul dies during the hours of the night, this god keeps him in his charge overnight and hands him over after sunrise to the deity presiding over daylight. And if such a worshipper dies during the day, he immediately hands over the departing soul to the god of daylight.

The word 'Ahaḥ' stands for the deity presiding over daylight, whose form is much brighter than that of the fire-god. He has jurisdiction over the entire range of what is known as the Bhūloka including the atmospheric region, and his function is to establish contact between the soul who travels by the path following the northerly course of the sun and the deity presiding over the bright fortnight. That is to say, if a Sādhaka dies during the dark fortnight, he has to remain under the care of the god of daylight till the arrival of the bright fortnight, when he is handed over to the deity presiding over the same. And if he dies during the bright fortnight, the god of daylight immediately takes the Sādhaka to the furthest limit of his own jurisdiction and hands him over to the deity presiding over the bright fortnight.

The word 'Śuklaḥ' stands for the deity presiding over the bright fortnight. His form is even more resplendent than that of the god of daylight. His jurisdiction extends even beyond the sphere of the earth, and covers the entire region lying between the earth, and heaven in which the sun shines for a whole human fortnight and nights are also of the same length. His function is to take the Sādhaka travelling by the path which follows the northerly course of the sun to the very limit of his jurisdiction and hand him over to the deity presiding over the northerly course of the sun. If a Sādhaka dies during the southerly course of the sun, this deity too, like the other deities mentioned above, takes care of the former till the sun turns towards the north; and if a soul departs during the northerly course, he immediately hands over the latter to the deity presiding over the northerly course of the sun.

The six months of the year, when the sun moves in a northerly direction, are called 'Uttarāyaṇa' or the northward course of the sun. The words 'Saṇmāsāḥ Uttarāyaṇam' in the verse refer to the deity presiding over this northward course of the

sun. His form is even more resplendent than that of the deity of the bright fortnight. His jurisdiction extends even beyond the intermediate region to those heavenly regions where the sun shines for as many as six months of the human calendar, and the nights too are of the same length. His function is to take the departing soul who travels by the path following the northerly course of the sun to the furthest limit of his jurisdiction and hand him over to the deity presiding over the year, as described in the Upaniṣads (vide *Chānd. Up.* IV.xv.5; V.x.1, 2; *Bṛ. Up.* VI.ii.15). The god of the year then takes the soul to the abode of the sun-god, from where the latter takes him to the moon-god and the moon-god to the god of lightning in the latter's abode. Attendants of the supreme Lord then arrive there from His abode and take the Sādhaka to that region, where at last he is brought face to face with God. It should be remembered here that the word 'Candra' (moon) figuring in this description does not refer to the planet which moves round the earth, or to the deity presiding over the same.

The word 'Brahmavidaḥ' in this context stands for worshippers who have obtained, through the scriptures and the teachings of preceptors, indirect knowledge of the truth about Brahma without attributes, or of the virtues, glory, reality and essence of God with attributes, as well as for the Karmayogī devoted to disinterested action. It does not refer to the illumined saints who have already realized God; for in the case of these latter migration after death from one place to another does not stand to reason. The Śruti also says: "His life-breath does not leave the body" (*Bṛ. Up.*); "It gets dissolved in the body itself" (*Ibid*; III.ii.11); "Becoming Brahma Itself, he realizes Brahma," (IV.iv.6).* The devotee who has realized God with attributes may either ascend to the supreme Abode of God along the path described above or may lose his identity in the very being of God according to his choice.

The word 'Brahma' here stands for God with attributes. Reaching Brahma means direct vision of God obtained after reaching the Lord's eternal indestructible Abode, which is variously known as Satyaloka or the supreme Abode, as Sāketaloka, Goloka, or Vaikuṇṭhaloka, and even as Brahmaloka. The reader should, however, note that this Brahmaloka is not the same as mentioned in verse 16 of this chapter and characterized as subject to appearance and disappearance.

Describing thus the path travelling by which one does not return, the Lord now speaks of the path going by which the Sādhaka returns to this mortal world.

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम्।
तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥ २५ ॥

धूमः the deity presiding over smoke; **रात्रिः** the goddess presiding over the night-time; **तथा** even so; **कृष्णः** the deity presiding over the dark fortnight; **षण्मासाः दक्षिणायनम्** the deity presiding over the six months of the southward journey of the Sun; **तत्र** (travelling) by that path; **योगी** the Sādhaka who performs actions with an interested motive; **चान्द्रमसम् ज्योतिः** the lustre of the moon; **प्राप्य** attaining; **निवर्तते** returns (to this mortal world).

The other path is that wherein are stationed the gods presiding over smoke,

* न तस्य प्राणा ह्युत्क्रामन्ति। अत्रैव समवलीयन्ते। ब्रह्मैव सन् ब्रह्माप्येति।

night, the dark fortnight, and the six months of the southward course of the sun; the Yogī (devoted to action with an interested motive) taking to this path after death is led by the above gods, one after another, and attaining the lustre of the moon (and enjoying the fruit of his meritorious deeds in heaven) returns to this mortal world. (25)

The word 'Dhūmaḥ' in this verse stands for the deity presiding over smoke, which is a symbol of darkness. The form of this deity is all darkness. Like the fire-god, he has his jurisdiction over the entire globe including the ocean. His function is to take Sādhakas travelling by the path following the southward course of the sun to the goddess presiding over night. When a Sādhaka of this class passes away during the day-time, he is taken care of by this deity during the day and at the commencement of the night handed over to the goddess of night.

The word 'Rātriḥ' should be similarly understood to mean the deity presiding over night. The form of this deity also is all darkness. Like the god of daylight, he has jurisdiction over the entire range of this planet including the atmospheric region. Of course, it should be borne in mind in this connection that the god of daylight exercises his authority over that part of the globe alone where there is daylight during a particular part of the day, while the goddess of night holds her sway over the other part where there is night. In this way the sphere of authority of these deities shifts according to the rotation of the earth round the sun in course of a day. The function of the goddess of night is to take the Sādhaka departing by the path following the southward course of the sun beyond her jurisdiction to the intermediate region lying between the earth and heaven and hand him over to the deity presiding over the dark fortnight. If the Sādhaka dies during the bright fortnight, he is kept by this deity in her own charge till the arrival of the dark fortnight; and if he dies during the dark fortnight, he is immediately committed to the charge of the deity presiding over the same.

The word 'Kṛṣṇaḥ' stands for the deity presiding over the dark fortnight. His form too is all darkness. His jurisdiction extends over the intermediate region lying between the earth and heaven, where the sun shines for a whole terrestrial fortnight, and nights too are of the same duration. His authority is, however, equally shared by the deity presiding over the bright fortnight, who holds his sway in that part of the intermediate region where the moon shines during a particular period of the month; whereas this deity exercises his authority over the other part where there is no moonlight during that part of the month. In this way the sphere of authority of these two deities as well shifts according to the revolution of the moon round our planet in course of a month. His function is to hand over the Sādhaka departing by the path following the southward course of the sun to the deity presiding over this course. When a Sādhaka of this class departs during the northward course of the sun, he is taken care of by this deity till the sun returns to the southward course; and if he dies during the southward course, he is immediately handed over to the deity presiding over the same.

The six months of the year, when the sun takes the southward course, are known as the 'Dakṣiṇāyana'. In the present context, however, the word stands for the deity who presides over this southward course. The

form of this deity too is all darkness. The jurisdiction of this deity extends over the celestial worlds beyond the intermediate region, where the sun shines for a period equivalent to six earthly months, and nights also are of the same length. His authority over these worlds is, however, equally shared by the deity presiding over the northern course of the sun, who holds his sway over those parts of the heavenly worlds where the sun shines during a particular part of the year; where as the god of the southward course exercises his authority over the other parts where darkness prevails during that particular period. The sphere of authority of these two deities, therefore, shifts according to the revolution of the earth round the sun in course of a year. The function of this deity is to take the Sādhaka proceeding to the heavenly regions by the path following the southward course of the sun beyond the limit of his jurisdiction, and hand him over to the deity presiding over the world of the Manes as described in the Upaniṣads. This latter deity hands him over to the deity presiding over the heavens, and this last deity takes him to the moon-world (*Chān. Up.*V.x.4). The moon-world here implies all the worlds up to Brahmaloka, which are subject to appearance and disappearance. The reader should, however, note that the world of the Manes, or Pitṛloka, as referred to in the Upaniṣads is not that Pitṛloka which is a part of the intermediate region, and where the sun shines for a full human fortnight and nights also are of the same length.

Men who perform meritorious deeds for obtaining the heaven-world etc., also exercise control over their senses. From this point of view, it is quite in order to call them Yogīs. Besides, a man fallen from Yoga also ascends to heaven by this path and returns to this mortal plane after residing there for some time. Since he too belongs to the class of persons who travel by this path, the use of the term 'Yogī' is quite appropriate in this case. By using the word 'Yogī' in this context the Lord further indicates that this path is not for men of a Tāmasika disposition given to sinful pursuits, but for those who are entitled to the higher worlds by virtue of their devotion to duties enjoined by scriptures (II.42,43,44 and IX.20,21 etc.).

The deity presiding over the moon-world possesses a form whose lustre is refreshingly cool. The word 'Jyotiḥ' here signifies an effulgent form resembling that of the moon-god; and he who attains such a form is said to have attained the lustre of the moon. This means that the Sādhaka who ascends to the moon-world is endowed with a celestial form possessing a cool lustre and enjoys heavenly pleasures as a reward for his meritorious deeds. On the expiry, however, of the time-limit allotted for his residence there he has to return to this mortal world. This he is compelled to do when the stock of merits responsible for his residence there as well as for the enjoyment of heavenly pleasures gets exhausted through enjoyment. In course of his return journey to this terrestrial lane he assumes various shapes and forms. For instance he descends from the moon-world to ether. Lower down he assumes the form of air, and is then transformed into smoke. From the state of smoke he enters vapour; from vapour he takes the form of a cloud and from the cloud he comes down to the earth in the form of rain-drops and thereby enters the seeds of foodgrains like wheat, barley, rice, sesamum, beans etc., or other herbs and plants. Through them he gradually enters the semen of a male living being and in the process of his union with a female makes his way through semen-drops into the latter's womb. In this way he is reborn into a species determined by his previous Karmas (*Chān. Up.* V.x.5,6,7).

Describing thus the two paths that follow the northward and southward courses respectively of the sun, the Lord now proceeds to declare them as eternal and thus winds up the topic.

शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययावर्तते पुनः ॥ २६ ॥

हि because; जगतः of the world; एते these two; शुक्लकृष्णे bright and dark (otherwise known as Devayāna or the path of gods and Pitṛyāna or the path of Manes); गती paths; शाश्वते (as) eternal; मते are considered; एकया (proceeding) by one of them; अनावृत्तिम् the supreme state from which there is no return; याति one reaches; अन्यया (and proceeding) by the other; पुनः आवर्तते one comes back (to this mortal world), i.e., becomes subject to birth and death once more.

For these two paths of the world, the bright and the dark, are considered to be eternal. Proceeding by one of them, one reaches the supreme state from which there is no return; and proceeding by the other, one returns to the mortal world, i.e., becomes subject to birth and death once more. **(26)**

The word 'Jagataḥ' in this verse stands for the totality of living beings, both sentient and insentient, who live and move in the various regions of the universe, upper as well as lower; for all classes of beings can proceed by either of these two paths on obtaining the necessary qualificaiton. Some time or other in course of his peregrination through the eight million odd species of life, God vouchsafes to every Jīva a golden opportunity to attain the celestial regions or enter His own supreme Abode by endowing him with a human body. If he makes the best use of his life on that occasion, he can certainly reach the destined goal by traversing any of these two paths. In this way both these paths have indirect relation with every living being. These two paths have existed for all beings from time without beginning, and will ever exist for them. It is for this reason that they have been called 'eternal'. Even though during the Final Dissolution, when all the worlds merge in God, these two paths and the deities presiding over them also disappear in God, nevertheless they are created again, as of old, when there is a new creation. Therefore, there can be no objection to their being called eternal.

The path which leads to the supreme Abode of God is full of light and heavenly in character. The deities too presiding over this path are all effulgent, and the heart of those who travel by this path is also ever illumined by the light of wisdom. It is for these reasons that this path has been termed as the 'bright' path. On the other hand, the path which leads to the celestial regions including the Brahmaloka, or the abode of Brahmā, is dark when compared with the 'bright' path; the deities too presiding over it are constituted of darkness; and those who depart by this path also remain deluded by ignorance. Hence this second path has been styled as 'dark'.

The word 'Anāvṛttim' in this verse stands for the supreme Abode of God, attaining which the Sādhaka does not return to this mortal plane. In verse 24 it was stated that the Yogīs departing by the 'bright' path finally reach Brahma or God. The word 'Anāvṛttim' has been used in this verse just in order to make it clear that on attaining Brahma or God

one does not take birth again; hence He is also termed as 'Anāvṛtti'.

By using the expression 'Punaḥ Āvartate', the Lord indicates that all the worlds attained through the 'dark' path are subject to appearance and disappearance. The intention is to show that the worlds which are reached through the 'dark' path are all perishable. Hence he who departs along this path has to return to the mortal plane.

Now, while praising the Yogī who possesses knowledge of these two paths, the Lord exhorts Arjuna to become a Yogī.

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन्योगी मुह्यति कश्चन।
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन॥ २७॥

पार्थ O son of Kuntī; एते these two; सृती paths; जानन् knowing; कश्चन any; योगी Yogī; न not; मुह्यति gets deluded; तस्मात् therefore; अर्जुन O Arjuna; सर्वेषु कालेषु at all times; योगयुक्तः भव be steadfast in Yoga.

Knowing thus the secret of these two paths, O son of Kuntī, no Yogī gets deluded. Therefore, Arjuna, at all times be steadfast in Yoga in the form of equanimity (i.e., strive constantly for My realization). (27)

The word 'Sṛtī', together with the demonstrative adjective 'Ete', stands for the two paths described in the preceding verses. The virtuous soul who either performs religious acts or worships gods with an interested motive leaves this world by the 'dark' path and attains the heaven-world according to the relative worth of his Karma, returning to earth when the stock of his merits gets exhausted (IX.20,21). Even so the Karmayogī, devoted to disinterested action or worship, and the Jñānayogī, who renounces the sense of doership, both depart by the bright path and reach the supreme Abode of God, whence they have no more to return. Realizing this truth full well and with perfect faith is what is meant by knowing the secret of these two paths.

All Sādhakas who follow any of the paths recommended in the Śāstras as a means to God-realization, such as Karmayoga or the Yoga of action, Dhyānayoga or the Yoga of Meditation, Bhaktiyoga or the Yoga of Devotion, and Jñānayoga or the Yoga of Knowledge, are to be known as Yogīs. Among such Yogīs whoever succeeds in realizing the truth about the two paths referred to above does not get deluded. This is what is indicated by the use of the word 'Kaścana' in this verse. Even though pursuing any of the aforementioned Yogas he who does not know the secret of these two paths has a natural tendency to get attached to the enjoyments of this world or the next, and fall from Yoga. This is what is meant by his being deluded. On the other hand, he who knows the secret of these two paths does not get attached to any form of enjoyment, realizing as he does that enjoyments obtained in any of the worlds up to Brahmaloka are perishable and trivial, and remains constantly engaged in practices leading to God-realization. This is what is meant by his not getting deluded.

The importance of Yoga as a discipline for God-realization is so great that the Yogī who is established in such a Yoga fully realizes the truth about these two paths, so that he no longer falls into the delusion of getting attached to any form of enjoyment. It is therefore that the Lord asks Arjuna to devote himself with reverence to the

constant practice of Karmayoga with special emphasis on devotion, for the pleasure of the Lord Himself. This is the force of the use of the word 'Tasmāt' in this verse. Verse 7 of this chapter also contained a similar exhortation for Arjuna for it was this form of practice that Arjuna was eminently qualified for.

The exhortation referred to above is intended to emphasize the fact that the span of life allotted to a human being is extremely short, and one may be overtaken by death at any moment. If, therefore, a man does not strive to devote every moment of his life to a spiritual discipline, his Sādhanā will suffer from occasional breaks. And if death overtakes him during any such break he will be compelled to take birth again as one fallen from Yoga. Therefore, it is incumbent on every human being to remain constantly engaged in practices leading to God-realization.

In this way the Lord exhorted Arjuna to be steadfast in Yoga. He now concludes the chapter by glorifying the man who is established in Yoga, and pointing out the fruit of applying himself to spiritual practice in accordance with the spirit of the profound truth revealed in the chapter.

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम्।
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम्॥ २८॥

योगी the Yogī; इदम् this (profound truth); विदित्वा realizing; वेदेषु to (a study of) the Vedas; च as well as; यज्ञेषु to (the performance of) sacrifices; तपःसु to (the practice of) austerities; दानेषु (and) to the practice of charities; यत् which; पुण्यफलम् the reward; प्रदिष्टम् has been ascribed (in the scriptures); तत् that; सर्वम् all; एव doubtless; अत्येति transcends; च and; आद्यम् beginningless; परम् supreme; स्थानम् state; उपैति attains.

The Yogī, realizing this profound truth, doubtless transcends all the rewards, ascribed in the scriptures to the study of the Vedas, as well as to the performance of sacrifices, austerities and charities, and attains the beginningless supreme state. (28)

The word 'Yogī' here stands for the Sādhaka who constantly applies himself, with reverence and devotion, to any one of the practices that have been recommended in the scriptures as a means to God-realization. 'Idam' covers the entire body of teachings contained in this chapter. And realization of this profound truth consists in thoroughly grasping the meaning of whatever has been taught in this chapter, viz., the worship of both the qualified and absolute aspects of God, as well as of God with form and without form, the virtues, glory and greatness of God, practices leading to God-realization, the worlds from which man has to return and the state of being which brings cessation of rebirth and so on.

The word 'Vedas' covers all the four Vedas together with the branches of learning that are considered as auxillary to them, as well as all other scriptures agreeing with the Vedas. 'Sacrifice' means all kinds of ritual acts enjoined by the scriptures, such as worship, offering of oblations into the sacred fire, and so on. Similarly 'austerities' means all forms of askesis recognized by the Śāstras, such as the observance of religious vows, keeping fasts, practice of

sense-control, performance of one's own obligatory duties and so on. Even so 'Charities' include all kinds of gifts sanctioned by the Śāstras, such as the gift of food, the gift of learning, the gift of land etc., and all philanthropic acts. The word 'Puṇya' forming part of the compound word 'Puṇyaphalam' stands for the store of religious merit that accrues from a study of the Vedas and the performance of sacrifices, charities, austerities, and other religious acts, carried on with reverence and devotion and with an interested motive; and the attainment of the various celestial worlds up to Brahmaloka and of the enjoyments obtained there is the fruit of such merit promised in the Vedas and other scriptures. Knowing all these worlds, as well as the enjoyments obtained in them, as transient and momentary, when one ceases to have any attraction for them, and cultivating complete indifference towards them actually leaves them far behind, one is said to have transcended all the rewards promised in the scriptures.

The word 'Sthānam' in this verse, together with the adjectives 'Param' and 'Ādyam' qualifying it, stands for that which has been spoken of in this very chapter as the supreme Abode of God, whence one does not return to the whirligig of births and deaths, and which is at the beginning of all, beyond all and the superior to all. To realize it, and then enter it is what is meant by attaining it. Attainment of the supreme Goal, the supreme State or the Divine State, and Realization of the Divine Puruṣa are only other names for it.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अक्षरब्रह्मयोगो
नामाष्टमोऽध्याय: ॥ ८ ॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the eighth chapter entitled "The Yoga of Indestructible Brahma".

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter IX

The knowledge imparted by the Lord in this chapter has been called by Him the sovereign science and the sovereign secret. Therefore, this chapter has been given the title of "Yoga of the sovereign science and the sovereign secret".

Title of the Chapter

Summary of the Chapter

In verses 1 and 2 of this chapter, the Lord undertakes to impart to Arjuna once more the knowledge of both the absolute and embodied aspects of Divinity, and sings the glory of that Knowledge. Verse 3 declares that people having no faith in this knowledge revolve in the whirligig of births and deaths. In verses 4 to 6 the Lord describes, at the outset, the all-pervasive and detached character of His unmanifest aspect, and indicating His divine power of Yoga declares in the end that all beings abide in Him even as air abides in ether. Thereafter, verses 7 to 10 tell us how at the time of final dissolution all beings enter God's Prakṛti, how at the beginning of creation they are again brought forth by Prakṛti under His supervision, and how while engaged in such acts of creation and dissolution God ever remains unattached to them. Denouncing in verses 11 and 12 those who being unacquanted with God's supreme glory despise Him, the Lord tells us in verses 13 and 14 the way in which those great souls who are acquainted with His glory adore Him. Verse 15 speaks of the Jñānayogī, who worships God through his offering of Knowledge as one with him, as well as of those who worship Him in various ways in diverse celestial forms, such as the moon-god, the sun-god, Indra (the Lord of paradise) and the god of fire etc., knowing them as distinct from themselves as well as from God. Describing His identity along with His virtues, glory and various manifestations, in verses 16 to 19 the lord tells us that the whole of this universe, both in its manifest and unmanifest form, is His own manifestation. Verses 20 and 21 declare that those who perform sacrifices and other religious acts for obtaining the enjoyments of heaven ascend to heaven only to return to this world when their allotted span is over. Verse 22 embodies the Lord's vow of personally supplying the needs and safeguarding the interests of devotees who constantly remember Him in a disinterested spirit. In verses 23 to 25 the Lord declares that even those who worship other deities indirectly worship Him, though with a mistaken approach, and that such devotees do not know Him in reality; the result being that whereas worshippers of the other gods go to those gods, His own worshippers attain Him. Showing devotion to be comparatively easy of practice in verse 26, Arjuna is exhorted in the twenty-seventh to offer all his acts to God; while verse 28 declares God-realization to be the fruit of such offering. Declaring in verse 29 that He is equally present in all beings; the Lord glorifies in the thirtieth and the thirtyfirst the adoration practised by him who is exclusively devoted to Him. In verse 32 the Lord tells us that

surrender to Him ensures attainment of the supreme goal to women, Vaiśyas (members of the agriculturist and mercantile classes), Śūdras (those belonging to the artisan and labouring classes) and even to those of sinful birth. In verses 33 and 34 the Lord praises the pious Brāhmaṇas and devout royal sages, declares the human body to be mortal and exhorting Arjuna to surrender himself to Him, discusses the true character of surrender with all its limbs.

Link of the Discourse

At the beginning of Chapter VII, the Lord undertook to impart to Arjuna the knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma along with the knowledge of manifest Divinity. Discussing that subject accordingly, He finally spoke of realizing God together with what He called Brahma. Adhyātma, Karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña, and also of fixing one's thought on God at the hour of death. Thereupon, in Chapter VIII, Arjuna addressed seven questions to the Lord in order to seek enlightenment on the above terms, as well as on the subject of worshipping God at the last hour. The Lord briefly answered six of these questions in verses 3 and 4 of that chapter, while all the remaining verses were taken up in answering the seventh. Thus the discussion of Jñāna or the Knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma along with Vijñāna or the Knowledge of manifest Divinity, started in Chapter VII, having not been completed, the Lord takes up the subject again in Chapter IX for a clearer exposition. And in order to establish the link of this discourse with the subject discussed in Chapter VII, He undertakes in the very first verse to unfold the Knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma along with the Knowledge of manifest Divinity once more.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात्॥ १॥

अनसूयवे ते to you who are uncarping; **इदम्** this; **गुह्यतमम्** most secret; **विज्ञानसहितम्** along with the knowledge of manifest Divinity; **ज्ञानम्** the Knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma; **तु** once more; **प्रवक्ष्यामि** shall discuss at length; **यत्** which; **ज्ञात्वा** knowing; **अशुभात्** from the evil of worldly existence; **मोक्ष्यसे** you shall be free.

Śrī Bhagavān said: To you, who are devoid of the carping spirit, I shall now unfold the most secret knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma along with the knowledge of manifest Divinity, knowing which you shall be free from the evil of worldly existence. (1)

The fault of 'Asūyā' consists in belittling the merits of men possessing merits, finding fault with their virtues, reviling them and attributing false blame to them. He who is entirely free from this evil of 'Asūyā' by his very nature is called 'Anasūyu'.*

* Our scriptures define 'Anasūyā' as follows:—
न गुणान् गुणिनो हन्ति स्तौति मन्दगुणानपि।
नान्यदोषेषु रमते सानसूया प्रकीर्तिता॥ (*Atrismṛti,* 34)
"He who does not detract from the merits of those possessing merits, praises even those of scanty worth and does not take delight in the faults of others is said to possess the virtue of Anasūyā."

By calling Arjuna 'Anasūyu' or uncarping, the Lord indicates that he alone who has faith in Him, and is free from the fault-finding spirit, is qualified to receive the instruction contained in this chapter; while he who is lacking in faith, and full of the carping spirit, is disqualified for it. In XVIII.67 the Lord explicitly states that the teaching of the Gītā should never be imparted to one who finds fault with Him.

The word 'Jñānam' with the adjectives 'Idam' and 'Vijñānasahitam' stands here for the knowledge of the Absolute, formless Brahma as well as that of the qualified aspect of God with form and without form along with the secret of their respective glory and greatness, and the instructions leading to that knowledge, contained in Chapters VII, VIII and IX.

This knowledge has been described as 'Guhyatamam', 'the most secret thing', because of all secrets in the world the knowledge of the true character, love virtues, glory, greatness and splendour etc., of the integral Divinity or Puruṣottama and the conception of surrender to Him are the most secret of all. Teachings of a similar nature embodied in verse 20 of Chapter XV and verse 64 of Chapter XVIII as well have been called most secret by the Lord.

The world 'evil' stands here for all forms of suffering and actions which are responsible for the same, vices of all kinds, the shackles of worldly existence in the form of birth and death, and the origin of them all, viz., Ignorance. Being rid of the evil of worldly existence, therefore, means securing complete and lasting immunity from all these and realizing God, the embodiment of supreme Bliss.

In order to inspire Arjuna's faith in, and love for, the teaching which He promised to impart in the preceding verse, viz., the knowledge of absolute formless Brahma along with the knowledge of the qualified aspect of God, both with and without form, and in order to stimulate in him an ardent desire to hear it and carry it into practice, the Lord now reveals the true glory of such knowledge.

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम्।
प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम्॥ २॥

इदम् this Knowledge (of absolute formless Brahma along with the Knowledge of the qualified aspect of God with and without form); **राजविद्या** (is) a sovereign science; **राजगुह्यम्** a sovereign secret; **पवित्रम्** most holy; **उत्तमम्** most excellent; **प्रत्यक्षावगमम्** directly enjoyable; **धर्म्यम्** attended with virtue; **कर्तुम् सुसुखम्** very easy to practise; **अव्ययम्** (and) imperishable.

This knowledge of both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of Divinity is a sovereign science, a sovereign secret, supremely holy, most excellent, directly enjoyable, attended with virtue, very easy to practise and imperishable. (2)

The word 'Idam' stands for the same 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna', i.e., knowledge of both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God, which the Lord undertook to unfold in the preceding verse. The Knowledge referred to here is superior to all other known and unknown forms of knowledge; for him who has truly assimilated this knowledge, nothing remains to be known. It is therefore that it has been spoken of as a 'sovereign science'. The true nature of the qualified and absolute, as well as

of the manifest and unmanifest aspects of God, His virtues, glory and greatness, the process of His worship and the fruit of such worship, all this has been fully dealt with in this knowledge. Besides this, the Lord has unfolded His whole secret here and revealed the truth that He who stood before Arjuna as Śrī Kṛṣṇa was none else than the Creator and Destroyer of the whole universe, the substratum of all, the Almighty Lord, the supreme Brahma, and the supreme person, and that Arjuna should completely surrender himself to Him. Such a supreme secret could be revealed only before a qualified and faithful devotee like Arjuna, who was free from the carping spirit, and not before anybody and everybody. It is therefore that the Lord calls this knowledge 'a sovereign secret'.

This knowledge is so edifying and ennobling in character that whosoever hears of and reflects on it and acts according to it with faith is completely rid of all sins and vices and is hallowed for all time to come. It is therefore that it has been called 'supremely holy', and of all that is good and noble in the world, it is the noblest and the best; therefore, it has been characterized as 'most excellent'.

The fruit of this knowledge of both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God is not something invisible like effect of offering oblations to one's departed ancestors. Even as the Sādhaka advances on the path of self-surrender to God he is rid of his vices, evil ways and sufferings, and begins to enjoy supreme peace and incomparable bliss. Nay, he who fully attains this knowledge immediately realizes God, the ocean of supreme peace and supreme bliss, supremely loving, highly compassionate and friendly to all. It is therefore that the Lord calls it 'directly enjoyable'. And besides it does not come in conflict with any other Dharmas or duties, such as those enjoined by one's Varṇa or grade in society and Āśrama or stage in life; and being a supreme virtue in itself, it is superior to every other form of virtue. Hence it is 'attended with virtue' or full of virtue.

Action performed with some interested motive ceases after yielding its fruit. Even so worldly knowledge, once acquired, is forgotten unless kept alive by constant reference. This knowledge of the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God is, however, proof against decay. Once duly acquired, this knowledge never gets lost under any circumstance whatsoever. Moreover, its fruit too is imperishable. Hence it is called 'Āvyaya' or imperishable. This should not, however, lead anyone to conclude that because this knowledge is of such a great moment, it must be very difficult indeed to act according to it and attain it. In order to obviate this misapprehension the Lord says: "It is very easy to practise." The long and short of it is that the practice of self-surrender to God, as advised in this chapter, is exceptionally easy. For it involves no exertion of any kind, nor does it require any external urdertaking or preparation. To say nothing of those who have attained perfection in it, the Sādhaka treading this path begins to enjoy supreme peace and incomparable bliss from the very beginning of his practice.

If the knowledge of both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God is of such a great moment, and its practice also so very easy, one is tempted to ask: Why does everybody not adopt the same ? In order to show that failure to adopt it is mainly attributable to want of faith, the Lord now proceeds to denounce those who do not repose faith in this knowledge.

अश्रद्दधानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परन्तप।
अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि॥ ३॥

परन्तप O scorcher of foes, Arjuna; अस्य धर्मस्य in this Dharma; अश्रद्दधानाः reposing no faith; पुरुषाः people; माम् Me; अप्राप्य failing to reach; मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि in the path of the world of death; निवर्तन्ते revolve.

Arjuna, people having no faith in this Dharma, failing to reach Me, revolve in the path of the world of death. (3)

The word 'Dharmasya', with the demonstrative adjective 'Asya' qualifying it, stands for the knowledge of the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God, which has been extolled in the preceding verse, and which has been discussed in the whole of this chapter. 'Reposing no faith in this Dharma' means entertaining doubt and misconception about the statements contained in this chapter regarding the essential character, glory, virtues and greatness of God, the means to His realization and the fruit of such realization as untrue, far from possible and contrary to facts, belittling them as nothing but sentiments couched in an attractive garb, and entertaining other such notions which run counter to faith.

'Aśraddadhānāḥ' (lacking in faith) refers to those who having no faith in the essential character, virtues, glory and greatness etc. of God, do not practise devotion to Him in any form and fritter away their human existence, which is such a rare acquisition, in enjoying worldly pleasures and obtaining the means to such enjoyment.

In course of his peregrination through eight million and four hundred thousand varieties of existence as living beings the Jīva rarely attains the human body through the grace of God for securing liberation from the cycle of births and deaths, and realizing God. Even after obtaining such a rare boon in the shape of human existence, those who fail to practise adoration and meditation etc., through lack of faith in the teachings of the Lord are unable to realize God and begin to revolve as heretofore in the whirligig of births and deaths. This is what the Lord seeks to convey through this verse.

Commencing His teaching on the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God, which He promised to impart and extolled in the foregoing verses, the Lord now proceeds first of all to describe His Unmanifest aspect along with Its glory.

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः॥ ४॥

अव्यक्तमूर्तिना मया by Me as unmanifest Divinity; इदम् this; सर्वम् entire; जगत् universe; ततम् is permeated (as ice by water); च and; सर्वभूतानि all beings; मत्स्थानि rest on (the idea within) Me; अहम् (therefore, really speaking,) I; तेषु in them; न not; अवस्थितः (am) present.

The whole of this universe is permeated by Me as unmanifest Divinity, and all beings rest on the idea within Me. Therefore, really speaking, I am not present in them. (4)

The word 'Avyaktamūrtinā' stands for that all-pervading, formless Divinity with attributes, who has been referred to as 'Adhiyajña' in verse 4 of Chapter VIII, as

the 'supreme Divine Puruṣa' in verses 8 and 10, as 'the all-wise eternal Being' in verse 9, as the 'Unmanifest' and 'Indestructible' in verses 20 and 21, and as 'the supreme Puruṣa attainable only through exclusive Devotion' in verse 22.

The word 'Jagat', with the adjectives 'Idam' and 'Sarvam' qualifying it, stands for the whole universe consisting of the entire sentient and insentient creation.

Even as the air, fire, water and earth are permeated by ether, an ornament of gold is permeated by gold, and earthenware is permeated by earth, so is the entire universe permeated by the unmanifest aspect of God with attributes, who is its Creator. The Śruti says:—

"Whatever sentient and insentient creation there is in this universe, all that is permeated by God."* (*Iśopaniṣad,* II.I)

The word 'Sarvabhūtāni' in this verse stands for all sentient and insentient beings, including their bodies, senses, mind, intellect, and their objects, as well as the abodes of such beings. Laying hold of His Prakṛti, God Himself creates, sustains, and destroys the universe; it is He who holds this entire creation in an infinitesimal part of His Being (X.42); and He alone is the goal, sustainer, abode, support, restingplace, origin, end and repository of all (IX.18). In this way the existence of all beings depends on God. It is therefore that the verse speaks of all beings as resting in God.

Though permeating every atom of this universe, even as the atmosphere pervades every particle of a cloud, God is entirely beyond the world, and absolutely unconnected with it. He remains intact even when the entire universe is no more, just as the atmosphere remains intact even after the dispersal of the cloud. God does not cease with the cessation of the world. He shines in His glory even where there is no trace of any material existence. This is what the Lord seeks to bring out when He says that really speaking, He is not in beings. In other words, He is eternally existent in His own Self.

The statement of the Lord: 'I am not in them,' may be explained in other ways also as given below:—

Just as all living beings and objects seen in a dream being in the dreamer, the latter is not wholly limited by the objects of his dream, but exists beyond them as well, even so God, though permeating the whole universe, is not limited by it inasmuch as the latter exists in a fraction of His Being. Thus, being greater than the world, and its substratum, He is not in the world alone.

Secondly, a dreamer, though directly perceiving all the objects of dream in the course of his dream, has really no connection whatsoever with such objects or with the acts of his dream, and remains wholly beyond and unconnected with the dream-world; he existed before the dream, exists even while dreaming, and will exist after waking from the dream. Even so God ever exists and does not cease even when the whole world ceases to exist. On the other hand, He shines in His own glory even where there is no trace of the world. Thus, being altogether beyond the world, and unattached to it, He is not in the world.

Thirdly, just as the objects perceived in a dream being really non-different from the dreamer, nay, his very self, he is not in them, but he alone exists, even so the world being identical with God, nay, the very self of God, He is not in the world, but He alone is.

Thus, being the substratum of the world, and wholly beyond it, and the world being His very self, God is not in the world. From the moinstic standpoint this view also is quite correct.

* ईशावास्यमिदꣳसर्वं यत्किच जगत्यां जगत्।

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः॥ ५॥

च and; भूतानि (all those) beings; मत्स्थानि abiding in Me; न not; मे Mine; ऐश्वरम् योगम् (the wonderful power of) My divine Yoga; पश्य behold; भूतभृत् the Sustainer of beings; च and; भूतभावनः the Creator of beings; मम Mine; आत्मा Self; भूतस्थः dwelling in beings; न not.

Nay, all those beings abide not in Me; but behold the wonderful power of My divine Yoga; though the Sustainer and Creator of beings, My self in reality dwells not in those beings. (5)

The preceding verse stated that all beings abide in God; whereas in the present verse the Lord says, "Those beings do not abide in Me." How are these contradictory statements to be reconciled ? By inviting Arjuna to behold the wonderful power of His divine Yoga in this connection the Lord indicates that what appears impossible on the face of it can be made possible by the miraculous power of His divine Yoga. Just as a cloud both does and does not exist in the atmosphere, even so the world exists, and also does not exist in Him. The entire world is a creation of His power of Yoga, and He is its substratum; therefore all beings exist in Him. And notwithstanding this, He is wholly beyond them all; hence the world does not exist in Him. Therefore, so long as the world exists in one's conception, everything abides in God; the world has no other substratum than God. And when a man realizes God, nothing exists in his conception but God; therefore in the eyes of him who has attained this state, the world does not exist in God.

The statement of the Lord contained in this verse can also be interpreted in a different way so as to confirm rather than contradict what He stated in the preceding verse. When it is conceded that as the dream-world rests on the thought of the dreamer even so the entire universe hangs on God's thought alone, and that really speaking there is no existence apart from God, It will be easy to understand the statement of the Lord that 'those beings do not abide' in Him. If so, how does the world appear before the eyes ? What is the secret of its appearance ? Anticipating this question the Lord says, "That is a miracle of My wonderful power of Yoga. The world does appear in Me, and in reality nothing exists apart from Me. How wonderful !" That is to say, so long as the world exists in the eyes of man, everything abides in God; the world has no other substratum than God. And in reality God alone is everything, nothing exists but God. On realizing God, the Sādhaka directly perceives this truth. In the eyes of such a God-realized soul nothing exists apart from God. Therefore, it is quite correct to say that those beings do not really exist in God. From the monistic standpoint this interpretation appears to be quite sound.

The words 'Aiśvaram Yogam' denote the wonderful power, possessed by none other than God, of remaining absolutely detached from everything, even though creating and sustaining everything, and pervading the whole creation. While inviting Arjuna to behold the wonderful power of His divine Yoga, the Lord refers to all the facts mentioned in this and the preceding verse.

By using the words 'Mama Ātmā' the Lord refers to His qualified, formless aspect. For it is this formless aspect of God possessed of attributes, that creates and sustains this

universe. This is what the Lord means by speaking of His Self as 'the Sustainer and Creator of beings'. But, nevertheless God is in reality wholly beyond this world. It is therefore that the verse says: "He dwells not in those beings."

In the preceding verses the Lord stated that all beings are permeated by, and dwell in His unmanifest aspect. In order to elucidate the point further the idea is explained in the following verse by means of an illustration.

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान्।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय॥ ६॥

यथा just as; सर्वत्रगः moving everywhere; महान् वायुः the extensive air; नित्यम् आकाशस्थितः (is) ever present in ether (because born of ether); तथा even so; सर्वाणि भूतानि all beings (because they have originated from My thought); मत्स्थानि (are) dwelling in Me; इति thus; उपधारय know.

Just as the extensive air, which is moving everywhere, (being born of ether) ever remains in ether, likewise know that all beings (who have originated from My thought) abide in Me. (6)

In order to bring out the similarity of all beings with air, the terms 'Mahān' and 'Sarvatragaḥ' have been used with reference to air. That is to say, just as the air has access all round, even so all beings are ever wandering from one state of existence to another; and just as the air is very extensive in volume, even so the multitude of beings is very large.

The air has its origin in ether, it stays in ether, and also disappears into ether. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the word 'Nityam' with reference to 'Ākāśasthitaḥ'. The intention is to show that at every moment and under all circumstances ether is the substratum of air.

Like ether, God is uniform, formless, actionless, infinite, unattached and immutable; and like the air all beings spring from God, abide in God and finally merge into God. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the simile employed in this verse. Sprung from ether, remaining in and finally disappearing into ether, air can never and under no circumstance remain apart from ether but every remains in it; and yet ether has no connection whatsoever with the air of its movement and other changes in it, and is always beyond it. Even so since the emanation, existence and dissolution of beings are events that take place only in the thought of God, the whole multitude of beings exists in God alone; and yet God is entirely beyond those beings, and is always wholly immune from all sorts of changes.

While discussing the knowledge of the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God, and its glory, the Lord depicted so far the all-pervasive, unattached and immutable character of His formless aspect just with a view to revealing the truth about it. Now, while elucidating His character as the creator of beings, He refers in the next two verses to the destruction of being during the final dissolution, and to their emanation at the beginning of the next creation, with a view to explaining the truth of His acts of creation etc.

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम्।
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम्॥ ७॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; कल्पक्षये during the final dissolution; सर्वभूतानि all beings; मामिकाम् Mine; प्रकृतिम् Prakṛti; यान्ति enter; कल्पादौ (and) at the beginning of creation; तानि them; अहम् I; पुनः again; विसृजामि send forth.

Arjuna, during the final dissolution all beings enter My Prakṛti (the prime Cause), and at the beginning of creation, I send them forth again. (7)

A whole daytime of Brahmā is known as a 'Kalpa', and his nights are also of the same duration. Taking this as a unit we can gauge the extent of a whole lifetime of Brahmā consisting of a hundred years. The word 'Kalpakṣaya' denotes the expiry of a whole lifetime of Brahmā. It is also known as the final dissolution (Mahāpralaya).

The word 'Sarvabhūtāni' stands for all sentient and insentient beings, including their body, senses, mind, intellect, objects of enjoyment and abodes etc.

'Prakṛti' denotes the prime cause of the universe, or Primordial Nature, which has been referred to as 'Mahadbrahma' in verses 3 and 4 of Chapter XIV, and which is also called 'Pradhāna' or undifferentiated Matter. By calling it 'Māmikām' (Mine) the Lord indicates that this Prakṛti is His own Energy. During the final dissolution all embodied beings, including their body, senses, mind, intellect, objects of enjoyment and abodes, get dissolved into Prakṛti. In other words, they return to Primordial Nature along with their causal body, consisting of the latencies of their guṇas and karmas. This is what is meant by the entering of all beings in Prakṛti.

It will be remembered that verses 18 and 19 of Chapter VIII also speak of the emanation of beings from the Unmanifest at the commencement of the cosmic day, and of their merging into the same at the commencement of the cosmic night. It will, therefore, be relevant to ask here: Is that 'Unmanifest' the same as the Prakṛti referred to in this verse ? And is there any difference between the dissolution of beings into that Unmanifest and the entering of beings in this Prakṛti ? A reference to those verses will show that the Unmanifest spoken of there refers to the formless or subtle state of Prakṛti, and not to Primordial Nature. All embodied beings dissolve into that Unmanifest with their subtle bodies, whereas they merge into Primordial Prakṛti with their causal bodies. In the former state, Brahmā (the Creator) does not lose his identity; he only sleeps. And in the latter state Brahmā himself disappears. Thus there is a world of difference even between the dissolution of beings referred to in the above-mentioned verses and the final dissolution spoken of here.

Again, in verse 6 of Chapter VII, the Lord stated that the entire creation disappeared into Him; whereas, in the present verse, He speaks of beings merging in Prakṛti. Both these statements are correct; in fact, they represent the same thing. It has been already submitted that Prakṛti is God's own energy or power; and energy or power can never be separated from its possessor. In this way dissolution in Prakṛti is just the same as dissolution in God. Therefore, this verse speaks of all beings entering Prakṛti. And since this Prakṛti belongs to God and has God for its substratum, it is He in whom everything dissolves. In this way both these statements convey the same thing.

At the end of the period of final dissolution, which is of the same length as the span of Brahmā's life consisting of a full hundred years of his measurement, the desire arises in God for evolving a new creation, so as to enable the Jīvas

to work out their respective karmas. The point of time when this desire springs up in God is referred to here as 'Kalpādi' or the beginning of creation. It is also known as the commencement of a 'Mahāsarga' or new creation after final dissoluiton. At that time God revolves from His thought Brahmā or Hiraṇyagarbha with his abode for starting the process of creation of beings. This is what is meant by His sending forth beings at the beginning of every new creation.

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात्॥ ८॥

स्वाम् My own; प्रकृतिम् Prakṛti or Nature; अवष्टभ्य wielding; प्रकृतेः of their own individual nature; वशात् by force; अवशम् compelled; इमम् this; कृत्स्नम् all; भूतग्रामम् multitude of beings; पुनः पुनः again and again, repeatedly; विसृजामि (I) release (according to their respective karmas).

Wielding My Nature I release, again and again, (according to their respective karmas) all this multitude of beings subject to the influence of their own nature. (8)

The word 'Prakṛtim', with the adjective 'Svām' qualifying it, stands for Primordial Nature, in which, according to the preceding verse, all beings enter. And when God recalls this Prakṛti, which lies hidden within Him in the form of a potentiality, for carrying on the work of creation etc., He is said to wield His Nature for that purpose.

'Bhūtagrāmam' accompanied by 'Imam' and 'Kṛtsnam' stands for the totality of embodied beings, both sentient and insentient, already referred to by the term 'Sarvabhūtāni' occurring in the foregoing verse. The word 'Prakṛteḥ' refers to the individual nature of these beings, formed out of their respective guṇas and karmas. God's Prakṛti is cosmic Nature, and the individual nature of a Jīva is a part of that cosmic Nature. Remaining, tied down to this individual nature is what is meant by 'being subject to the influence of their own nature'.

He who having surrendered himself to God cuts asunder the bond of this nature no longer remains under its subjection. He reaches God, beyond Prakṛti, and realizes Him (VII.14).

So long as the Jīva remains under the subjection of his nature, He brings them forth again and again at the beginning of every round of creation in different species as heretofore according to their respective guṇas and karmas.

Even while thus engaged in the act of creation etc., of the universe, God is never bound by His actions. With a view to revealing this secret of divine action, the Lord now says:—

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय।
उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु॥ ९॥

धनञ्जय O conqueror of riches, Arjuna; तेषु कर्मसु to those actions; असक्तम् unattached; च and; उदासीनवत् apart as it were; आसीनम् standing; माम् Me (the supreme Spirit); तानि those; कर्माणि actions; न not; निबध्नन्ति bind.

Arjuna, those actions, however, do not bind Me, unattached as I am to such actions and standing apart as it were. (9)

'Tesu Karmasu' refers to all such acts as are performed by God for the creation, maintenance and destruction etc., of the universe, and which have already been briefly referred to in the preceding verse. God has no attachment whatsoever for those actions or their fruit: this is what is meant by His remaining unattached to those actions. And He remains altogether unconcerned with, and devoid of the sense of doership and partiality in respect of, all those activities for the creation etc., of beings which are being carried on under His supervision by Prakṛti according to the guṇas and karmas of those beings. This is what the Lord means by His standing apart as it were from those actions. It is only because He remains unattached to those actions and their fruit, and because He entertains no sense of doership or partiality in respect of such actions, that those actions do not bind him.

This shows that even in the case of other the easiest way to get rid of bondage in the form of fruits of actions, such as birth and death, joy and grief, pleasure and pain etc., is what has been stated above. He who, knowing this secret of Karma, acts without attachment to fruits, and without the sense of doership, easily escapes from the binding effect of Karma.

In order to explain the absence of doership ascribed to Him in the above verse by the words 'Udāsīnavad Āsīnam,' the Lord now says:—

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम्।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते॥ १०॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; मया अध्यक्षेण with Me as the supervisor; प्रकृतिः Prakṛti (Nature); सचराचरम् (the whole creation) consisting of sentient and insentient beings; सूयते brings forth; अनेन हेतुना due to this cause (alone); जगत् (the wheel of) Saṁsāra; विपरिवर्तते is going round.

Arjuna; with Me as the supervisor, Nature brings for the whole creation, consisting of both sentient and insentient beings; it is due to this cause that the wheel of Saṁsāra is going round. (10)

By calling Himself a mere supervisor, the Lord indicates that with reference to the processes of creation etc., of this universe that Lord stands as a mere presiding Spirit to whom Nature owes its existence and activity; and that deriving its existence and activity from Him, it is His Prakṛti which carries on all such activities as the creation of this unvierse.

The cultivator himself unites the seed with the earth as a supervisor; the earth then brings forth varieties of plants according to the seeds sown by the cultivator. So does God sow the seed of life in Prakṛti as supervising agent (XIV.3). In this way when union between Matter and Spirit has been brought about, Prakṛti evolves the entire creation of both sentient and insentient beings in various species of life according to the respective karma of each being.

This illustration has been given only to convey a rough idea of the process; in reality however, there is no similarity between the cultivator and God. For the cultivator, on the one hand, has a limited knowledge and limited power and is confined to a

limited space; and he cannot make the earth yield anything by communicating his own strength or energy. God, on the other hand, is all-knowing, all-powerful and all-pervading. Nature itself derives its existence and activity from Him and it is through His energy that it brings forth the entire creation.

In short, it is God's supervision and the doership of Prakṛti, that are responsible for all such activities as the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the latter half of the verse.

In verse 13 of Chapter IV and again in verse 8 of this chapter, the Lord stated that it was He who brought forth the multitude of beings in their different forms; whereas in the present verse He says that the whole creation consisting of sentient and insentient beings is evolved by Prakṛti. Though these two statements appear as mutually contradictory, there is really speaking no contradiction between them. Statements in which the Lord declares Himself to be the Creator of the world should be understood to mean that He does not actually create the world Himself, but that He does so through the medium of His energy, viz., Prakṛti, which He wields on such occasions. And where He speaks of Nature as carrying on the creation etc., of the world it should be understood that the latter does so under His supervision; for she derives her existence and activity from Him. She cannot do anything independently without the backing of God. It is therefore that the Lord said in verse 8, "Wielding My Nature, I bring forth the creation;" whereas in the present verse He says: "With Me as the supervisor, Nature evolves the universe." In reality, these two statements represent the same fact from two different points of view.

While discussing the knowledge of the Saguṇa and Nirguṇa aspects of God as promised by Him, the Lord dealt with in verses 4 to 6 of this chapter the secret and glory of His formless aspect with attributes. Thereafter, showing in verses 7 to 10, His non-attachment and indifference to all such activities as the creation of the world, He pointed out the secret of the transcendence of such actions. Now, in order to bring out the importance of his qualified and embodied aspect, the way to adore Him through devotion, and the secret of His virtues and glory. He proceeds in the next two verses to denounce those men of a demoniac disposition, who are ignorant of His greatness.

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम्॥ ११॥

मम Mine; **परम् भावम्** supreme nature; **अजानन्तः** not knowing; **मूढाः** fools; **मानुषीम् तनुम्** a human semblance; **आश्रितम्** having assumed; **माम्** Me; **भूतमहेश्वरम्** the supreme Lord of (the entire) Creation; **अवजानन्ति** think low of.

Fools, not knowing My supreme nature, think low of Me, the Overlord of the entire creation, who have put on the human semblance. (That is to say, they take Me, who have appeared in human garb through My Yogamāyā for the deliverance of the world, for an ordinary mortal.) (11)

The substantive 'Bhāvam' with its qualification 'Param', in this verse, stands for that supreme glory of the Lord, which has been represented in verses 4 to 6 in the form of attributes such as 'all-pervasiveness' etc., nay, which has been further referred

to as His 'divine Yoga', and which has been spoken of in verse 24 of Chapter VII as screened from the knowledge of the unwise. Out of compassion for all embodied souls and in order to take them all under His protection, and with a view to establishing Dharma, redeeming His devotees and enacting various other sports, the all-pervading and all-powerful God, who is the substratum of all, and who creates and destroys the whole universe, Himself appeared in a human garb as Śrī Kṛṣṇa through His own Yogamāyā of divine potency (IV.6—8). Those who are ignorant of this secret and have no faith in it are referred to here as not knowing the supreme nature of the Lord.

The word 'Mūḍhāḥ' (fools), in this verse, stands for men possessed of a fiendish and demonical nature, referred to in the next verse as well as in VII.15, and whose distinguishing marks have been discussed in verses 7 to 20 of Chapter XVI. Not knowing His transcendent glory as the supreme Lord of all embodied beings, from Brahmā, the Creator, down to the tiniest insect such fools look down upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary human being just like themselves, and therefore disobey His commands and level absurd charges against Him. This is what is meant when the Lord says, "Fools think low of Me."*

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः।
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः॥ १२॥

मोघाशाः cherishirg vain hopes; मोघकर्माणः indulging in futile pursuits; मोघज्ञानाः possessing fruitless knowledge; विचेतसः bewildered persons; राक्षसीम् fiendish; आसुरीम् demoniac; च and; मोहिनीम् delusive; प्रकृतिम् nature; एव alone; श्रिताः have embraced.

Those bewildered persons with vain hopes, futile actions and fruitless knowledge have embraced a fiendish, demoniacal and delusive nature. (12)

---

* The venerable Bhīṣma related to Duryodhana a dialogue between Brahmā and other celestials about Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That gives an indication of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glory. Cautioning the celestials, Brahmā said:—

"Bhagavān Vāsudeva (son of Vasudeva) the supreme Lord of all the worlds, is worthy of adoration to you all. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who bears the marks of Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself, viz., His conch, discus and club, wields extraordinary power. Never despise Him as an ordinary human being. He is the supreme secret, the supreme goal, the supreme Reality and the supreme glory. He is indestructible, unmanifest, eternal, the supreme Effulgence, the supreme Bliss and the supreme Truth. No celestial nor the lord of heaven, Indra, much less any human being, should ever ignore Lord Vāsudeva, the possessor of infinite strength, treating Him as a human being. He is the Ruler of all senses. Fools, who declare Him to be an ordinary man, are the most vile among men. This great Master of Yoga is the very soul of the entire creation. He bears the distinguishing mark of Śrīvatsa (a curl of golden hair on the chest). He is the same as the most illustrious Viṣṇu, who has a lotus sprung from His navel. Those who insult Him holding Him to be an ordinary mortal, and fail to recognize Him in His true colours are possessed of a Tāmasika disposition. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa bears a typical diadem on His head and the celebrated Kaustubha jewel on His chest, and dispels the fear of His friends. He who treats him with contumely is condemned to the most terrible hell.

एवं विदित्वा तत्त्वार्थं लोकानामीश्वरेश्वरः।
वासुदेवो नमस्कार्यः सर्वलोकैः सुरोत्तमाः॥ *(Mahā., Bhīṣma. 66.23)*

"O great celestials, knowing thus His essential character, all should humbly bow their heads to Bhagavān Vāsudeva, the supreme Lord of all creation."

The term 'Moghāśāḥ' stands for men possessed of hopes and aspirations which never reach their fulfilment. Such vain hopes are always nursed by men of the demoniac type, who have no idea of God's glory and power (XVI.10—12). Hence they have been spoken of as 'Moghāśāḥ' in this verse.

'Moghakarmāṇaḥ' refers to those whose activities in the form of sacrificial performance, charity and austere penance etc., are futile, *i.e.*, do not yield the fruit promised in the scriptures. Sacrifices etc., performed without faith, and in contravention of scriptural ordinance, by low types of worldly-minded men, who possess no faith in God nor in the scriptures, bring them no fruit either in this world or in the next. That is why such men have been called 'Moghakarmāṇaḥ', or indulging in futile actions (XVI.23; XVII.28).

The world 'Moghajñānāḥ' stands for those whose knowledge bears no fruitful result, and is founded neither on truth, nor on reasoning (XVIII.22). Regarding worldly enjoyments real and delightful, men who possess no knowledge of God's glory remain addicted to such enjoyments. They erroneously believe that the highest joy consists only in the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures, and that there is nothing higher than that (XVI.11); it is therefore that they remain deprived of true happiness. Hence they have been spoken of as 'Moghajñānāḥ'. Misusing their faculty of knowledge, such men wantonly throw it away.

Those whose mind is distracted, and is ever unsteady, because of its attachment to the various objects of the world, are called 'Vicetasaḥ'. The mind of men possessed of a demoniac temperament goes on frisking every moment from one thought to another. That is why such persons have been spoken of as 'Vicetasaḥ', or bewildered.

He who is disposed, like fiends, to bear ill will towards others without any rhyme or reason, as well as to injure others and inflict suffering on them is said to possess a 'fiendish nature.' Even so the tendency to persecute others, and rob them of their legitimate dues or possessions out of lust or greed, and with a view to achieving one's own selfish ends is called a 'demoniac disposition'. And lastly, the proclivity to inflict suffering on others through error of judgment or delusion, is known as the delusive nature. Instead of trying to renounce such vicious propensities he who deliberately clings to them, believing them to be good and desirable, is said to have 'embraced such natures.' Men who have no knowledge of the glory of God generally do so; that is why they have been spoken of as having embraced such a nature.

The use of the indeclinable 'Eva' indicates that such men invariably embrace the fiendish, demoniacal and delusive nature, and never adopt the divine nature.

Denouncing in the above words men possessed of the demoniac nature, who have no idea of the glory of God, the Lord now proceeds to describe the marks of the superior type of devotees, who are conversant with the glory of God, love none else than God, and have embraced the divine nature, with a view to revealing the truth about devotion to the Saguṇa aspect of God.

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम्॥ १३॥

तु on the other hand; पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; दैवीम् प्रकृतिम् the divine nature;

आश्रिताः having embraced; महात्मानः great souls; माम् Me; भूतादिम् the prime source of all lives; अव्ययम् (and) the imperishable eternal; ज्ञात्वा knowing (as); अनन्यमनसः with none else in mind; भजन्ति (constantly) worship.

On the other hand, Arjuna, great souls who have embraced the divine nature, knowing Me as the prime source of all lives and the imperishable eternal, worship Me constantly with none else in mind. (13)

The indeclinable 'Tu' has been employed in this verse with a view to bringing out the contrast between the low types of ingorant men, possessed of the demoniac nature, as described in verses 11 and 12 above, and the superior type of men, possessed of special merit, described in the present verse.

The word 'Prakṛtim', along with the adjective 'Daivīm' qualifying it, singnifies virtues of the Sāttvika type, which essentially belong to God (Deva) and lead one to the realization of God, and which have been mentioned in verses 1 to 3 of Chapter XVI under 26 different names, such as 'Fearlessness' etc. To adopt and cultivate such virtues is what is meant by 'embracing the divine nature'.

'Mahātmā' means one who possesses a great soul. And a great soul is he who has clung to God in every way with the object of achieving his great aim of God-realization. Therefore, the term 'Mahātmānaḥ' has been used in the present verse to indicate those disinterested devotees of God who love none else than God, who are ever steeped in divine love, and who are from every point of view qualified for God-realization.

The word 'Mām' (Me) refers to God with attributes, or Puruṣottama (the Supreme Person) as the Gītā calls Him. It is God with attributes who is responsible for the creation, maintenance and destruction of all sentient and insentient beings including the worlds inhabited by them, as well as their body, senses, mind, intellect and objects of enjoyment (VII.6; IX.18; X.2,4,5,6,8). He who realizes this truth can be said to recognize God as the prime source of all lives. Again, God is unborn and imperishable; it is only to shower His grace on the various Jīvas that He assumes and hides the human form as a matter of sport. It is He who is termed as the imperishable and indestructible Supreme Brahma or the supreme Spirit. He does not perish even when all beings perish (VIII.20). He who realizes this fact can be said to recognize God as 'the imperishable Eternal.'

The term 'Ananyamanasaḥ' stands for devotees possessed of exclusive love for God, whose mind does not feel attracted towards anything else than God, and to whom even a moment's separation from God appears quite unbearable. Such a devotee constantly worships God in the manner described in the next verse, as well as in X.9.

The Lord now proceeds to tell us how the love-intoxicated devotees referred to above worship God.

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते॥ १४॥

दृढव्रताः (those devotees) of firm resolve; सततम् constantly; कीर्तयन्तः chanting (My names and glories); च and; यतन्तः striving (for My realization); च and; माम् to Me; नमस्यन्तः bowing (again and again); नित्ययुक्ताः ever united (with Me through meditation); भक्त्या with

(single-minded) devotion; माम् Me; उपासते worship.

Constantly chanting My names and glories and striving for My realization, and bowing again and again to Me, those devotees of firm resolve, ever united with Me through meditation, worship Me with single-minded devotion. (14)

Those who are steadfast in their vow and firm in their resolve, are called 'Dṛḍhavratāḥ'. The loving devotees of God are adamantine in their resolve, unwavering in their faith, firm in their conclusion and resolute in their vows. The most terrible calamities and the mightiest obstacles fail to deter them from their practice or shake them from their resolution or opinion. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of them as 'devotees of firm resolve'.

The adverb 'Satatam' denotes continuity of practice. It mainly qualifies the verb 'Upāsate'. Chanting of God's names and glories and offering salutations etc., to Him being parts of worship, the word can be indirectly said to refer to them as well. In other words, the loving devotees of God are ever engaged in the worship of God, now chanting His names or singing his glories, now bowing to Him, now striving to realize Him through service and other ways and all the time keeping the mind fixed on him.

Expatiating on the incomparable virtues, glory, greatness and sports etc., of God before devotees through religious discourses and lectures etc., muttering or loudly chanting, either singly or in company, the sacred Names of God, such as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, Hari, Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, Keśava, Mādhava, Śiva and so on, visualizing God to be present before the Sādhaka; singing the praises, glory or stories of God with full faith and love, in a subdued or loud tone, either standing or squatting, and to the accompaniment of music and dance or without the same; offering praises or praying to God through the utterance of beautiful poems and psalms, and all other activites of an allied nature are covered by the participle 'Kīrtayantaḥ'.

The word 'Yatantaḥ' should be understood to mean offering worship to God, rendering bodily and other services to all regarding them as the very embodiment of God, hearing of the virtues, glory and stories etc., of God from the lips of His devotees, and practising with zeal and assiduity all other limbs of devotion not directly mentioned in this verse.

Visiting a temple and prostrating oneself with faith and love before the sacred image of God enshrined therein; bowing before an image or picture of God installed in one's own house; making obeisance to the divine names represented in letters; offering salutations to the feet of an image or picture of God or to the marks thereof; bowing before sacred books discussing the truth, mysteries, love, and glory of God and narrating His sweet stories; and bowing with due respect, reverence and love, with a voice choked with emotion and with mind, speech and body all whom one meets looking upon them as an embodiment of God, or recognizing God to be present in their heart,—all this is covered by the words 'bowing again and again to God.'

The word 'Nityayuktāḥ' has been used with reference to those devotees who constantly keep their mind fixed on God even while they are walking or moving about, standing or sitting, lying asleep or awake, and performing all sorts of activities or practising meditation in seclusion.

Exclusive love mixed with faith and reverence is called devotion. Worshipping

God with devotion, therefore, means carrying on without interruption all the practices enumerated above with faith and exclusive love.

Describing thus the mode of worship practised by devotees possessing exclusive love for God; and conversant with His virtues, glory etc., the Lord now reveals the mode of worship practised by other types of worshippers.

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते।
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम्॥ १५॥

अन्ये others (those who tread the path of Knowledge); माम् Me (in My Absolute, formless state); ज्ञानयज्ञेन through their offering of Knowledge; यजन्तः worshipping; एकत्वेन as one (with themselves); उपासते betake themselves (to Me); च अपि and still others; पृथक्त्वेन through diversity (*i.e.*, taking Me in diverse celestial forms); बहुधा in many ways; विश्वतोमुखम् (worship Me in) a universal Form facing all sides.

Others (who follow the path of Knowledge) betake themselves to Me through their offering of Knowledge, worshipping Me (in My absolute, formless aspect) as one with themselves; while still others worship Me in My Universal Form in many ways, taking Me as manifested in diverse celestial forms. (15)

The Word 'Anye' (others) has been used in the verse to distinguish the Jñānayogīs from the category of devotees mentioned above.

It is the absolute, formless aspect of God that is worshipped through the offering of Knowledge. Hence the word 'Mām' has been interpreted in that sense. By using the word 'Mām' in this connection, the Lord establishes His identity with the attributeless Brahma, who is absolute Truth, pure Knowledge and unmixed Bliss.

The 'offering of Knowledge' mentioned in this verse is the same as jñānayoga, or the discipline of Knowledge, referred to in III.3. He who worships God through the practice of Jñānayoga believes that the activities carried on by the body, senses and mind represent only the reaction of the guṇas, born of Māyā, on the guṇas themselves, and therefore does not entertain the sense of doership in respect of those activities. He views the whole objective existence as analogous to water appearing in a mirage or as the world seen in a dream. He refuses to recognize the existence of anything other than the absolute, formless Brahma or God, who is absolute Truth, pure Knowledge and unmixed Bliss. It is His talk that he hears, His truth that he reflects on and His essence that He constantly meditates upon. In this way he is ever engaged in the practice of constantly remaining in a state of atonement with Brahma. This is what is meant by worshipping God through the offering of Knowledge.

The indeclinables 'Ca' and 'Api' have been used to bring out the distinction between the Jñānayogīs referred to above and the other type of worshippers mentioned in this verse.

God Himself is present before us in the form of the universe. Therefore, the various celestials mentioned in the scriptures, such as the moon-god, the sun-god, the god of fire, Indra (the lord of paradise), and Varuṇa (the god of water), who represent so many limbs of His Universal Form, are in reality nothing but the different aspects of God. And even all beings are manifestions of

God. Regarding them as nothing else than God and to serve them by one's own duties in a selfless spirit is worshipping of God in His universal Form in many ways. (XVIII.46).

In order to make it clear how the worship of the Absolute and that of the different celestials too is regarded as the worship of God Himself, the Lord now proceeds to establish in the next four verses that the whole universe, and whatever lies beyond it, is nothing but God Himself.

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम्।
मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम्॥ १६॥

क्रतुः the Vedic ritual; अहम् (am) I; यज्ञः the sacrifice; अहम् (am) I; स्वधा the offering to the departed; अहम् (am) I; औषधम् the herbage and foodgrains; अहम् (am) I; मन्त्रः the sacred formula; अहम् (am) I; आज्यम् the clarified butter; अहम् (am) I; अग्निः the (sacred) fire; अहम् (am) I; हुतम् (even) the act of offering oblations (into the fire); अहम् I (am); एव indeed.

I am the Vedic ritual, I am the sacrifice, I am the offering to the departed; I am the herbage and foodgrains; I am the sacred formula, I am the clarified butter, I am the sacred fire, and I am verily the act of offering oblations into the fire. (16)

In this verse the Lord indicates that all ritual acts enjoined by the Vedas and Smṛti texts for the propitiation of the different gods and manes, as well as the various means of performing them, are the same as God Himself. The Vedic rituals are called by the name of 'Kratu'. Similarly, the rituals enjoined by the Smṛtis, such as the five great sacrifices and so on, are known by the name of 'Yajña'; and the food offered to the Manes is termed as 'Svadhā'. The Lord declares that all these constitute His Being And whatever plants, foodgrains and medicinal herbs are required for the performance of these functions are also His manifestations. Even so the Mantras or sacred incantations employed in these performances are His verbal images. He is the clarified butter and other materials offered in these sacrifices. He constitutes the sacred fires known by the names of 'Gārhapatya', 'Āhavanīya', 'Dakṣiṇāgni' and so on, used in these sacrifices, and lastly, He Himself is the act of offering oblations into the fire, which constitutes a sacrifical performance. That is to say, the articles required for the performance of sacred rituals sanctioned by the scriptures, such as a sacrifice, Śrāddha (a ceremony intended to gratify the soul of one's departed ancestors) and so on, the sacred formulae used in these performances, the altar at which the oblation is offered to the deity, and all activities of the mind, speech and body connected with such performances—all these represent Him. It is in order to prove His identity with everything mentioned in this verse that the Lord has used the word 'I' with every one of the objects enumerated by Him. The use of 'Eva' emphasizes the fact that there is nothing in this world apart from God. In this way it is God who is manifested in the form of various objects; they appear different from God only because we are ignorant of the truth about Him.

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः।
वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च॥ १७॥

अस्य जगतः of this universe; धाता sustainer and he who awards to each the fruit of his action; पिता father; माता mother; पितामहः grandsire; वेद्यम् the one worth knowing; पवित्रम् purifier; ओङ्कारः the sacred syllable OM; ऋक् the Ṛgveda; साम the Sāmaveda; च and; यजुः the Yajurveda (also); अहम् (am) I; एव indeed.

I am the sustainer and ruler of this universe, its father, mother and grandfather, the one worth knowing, the purifier, the sacred syllable OM, and the three Vedas—Ṛk, Yajuṣ and Sāma. (17)

The word 'Jagataḥ' stands for the entire creation consisting of both sentient and insentient beings. The whole of this has emanated from God, who alone is its supreme cause. It is therefore that the Lord refers to Himself as the father and mother of the universe. He holds the universe in a fraction of His being (X.42), and it is He who awards to each the fruit of his actions; hence the Lord calls Himself the sustainer of the universe. Again, because He Himself is the progenitor of Brahmā and the other Prajāpatis (gods and Ṛṣis presiding over creation) who carry on the actual work of creation therefore the Lord speaks of Himself as the 'grandfather' of the universe.

That which is worth knowing is called 'Vedya'. God alone is the one supreme Truth knowable through all the Vedas (XI.15). It is therefore that the Lord declares Himself as the 'one worth knowing'.

That which is pure itself, and easily purifies others by wiping out their sins, is called 'Pavitra'. God is supremely holy; and His very sight, talk with Him, and the mere thought of Him go to make one exceedingly pure. Moreover, all that is purifying in this world, viz., the practice of Japa or muttering of a sacred formula, austerities, sacred vows and holy places etc., is the very self of God; nay, the purificatory virtue possessed by these has also been derived from God. All this is sought to be conveyed by the Lord when He calls Himself 'Pavitra' or the Purifier.

The sacred syllable 'OM' is an appellation of God; it is also knowing by the name of 'Praṇava'. Verse 13 of Chapter VIII has referred to it as Brahma and advocated its recitation. It is in order to reveal the identity of the Name with the object signified, that the Lord says in this verse, "I am the sacred syllable OM."

The Vedas have been revealed by God, and our knowledge of God is derived from them; it is therefore that the Lord declares the three Vedas—Ṛk, Sāma and Yajuṣ as identical with Himself.

The indeclinable 'Ca' has been used to conjoin or synthesize all the ideas expressed in this verse; and the word 'Eva' is intended to negative the existence of anything else than God. The idea is that everything mentioned in this verse is identical with God, and that nothing exists apart from God.

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत्।
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम्॥ १८॥

गतिः the supreme goal; भर्ता supporter; प्रभुः lord; साक्षी witness; निवासः abode; शरणम्

shelter; सुहृत् a well-wisher seeking no return; प्रभवः origin; प्रलयः end; स्थानम् resting-place; निधानम् store-house; अव्ययम् बीजम् (and) imperishable seed (am I).

I am the supreme goal, supporter, lord, witness, abode, refuge, wellwisher seeking no return, origin and end, resting-place, store-house (to which all beings return at the time of universal destruction), and imperishable seed. (18)

A thing which is worth attaining is indicated by the term 'Gati'. The highest object worth attaining in the form of the eternal abode is God; it is therefore that the Lord calls Himself by the term 'Gati' or goal. The terms 'Parā Gati' or 'Paramā Gati' (supreme Goal or supreme State) and 'Avināśī Pada' (Eternal State), also indicate the same state.

He who supports or maintains is called 'Bhartā'. The protector and supporter of the whole world is God Himself; hence the Lord speaks of Himself in this verse as 'Bhartā' or supporter.

A master, who rules, is known by the term 'Prabhu'. God alone is the supreme ruler of all. He is the great lord of all lords, the supreme deity of all deities, the supreme Master of masters, the Lord of all the worlds and the supreme God, the highest object of worship (*Śveta. Up.* VI.7). It is through fear of Him that the sun-god, the god of fire, Indra (the lord of paradise), the wind-god, the god of death and all other gods carry on their respective functions (*Kaṭha. Up.* II.iii.3). It is therefore that the Lord refers to Himself as 'Prabhu' or lord.

God is the knower and seer of all the worlds, of all embodied beings and of all their doings, good, bad. There is not a single action of any kind whatsoever, belonging to the past, present or future, which can escape the eye of God. The degree of omniscience possessed by Him is unequalled. His omniscience is *par excellence*. It is therefore that the Lord declares Himself to be the 'witness'.

A place of abode is called 'Nivāsaḥ'. It is in God alone that all beings dwell at every time and under every circumstance no matter whether they are on their legs or at rest, standing or sitting, awake or asleep, being born in this world or giving up the ghost. Hence the Lord speaks of Himself as the 'Nivāsa' or Abode.

One under whom shelter is taken, is referred to as 'Śaraṇam' or refuge. God is unequalled in His love for those who take shelter under Him, in his solicitude for the protection of the suppliant, and in his anxiety to alleviate the suffering of those who seek His protection. In the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the Lord says:—

"I grant him security from all, who surrenders himself to Me even once saying, "I am Thine," and seeks My protection; such is my vow."* (VI.18.33).

It is therefore that the Lord refers to Himself as 'Śaraṇam' or refuge.

A kind-hearted and loving person who is naturally and gratuitously solicitous for the welfare of another, and actually does good to others without expecting any return, is known as a 'Suhṛd' or disinterested friend. God is the motiveless benefactor, the supreme well-wisher, and the greatest and most loving friend of all living beings; it is therefore that the Lord calls Himself a 'Suhṛd' or disinterested friend. In the concluding verse of Chapter V as well the Lord similarly said, "Having known Me as the disinterested friend of all living beings, My devotee attains supreme peace." (V.29).

The creation, maintenance and

* सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते। अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्व्रतं मम॥

destruction of this universe are carried on by the mere will of God. It is therefore that the Lord declares Himself to be the origin and end, as well as the resting-place.

A place where things are stored for a long time is called a 'Nidhāna' or storehouse. During the final dissolution Nature in her unmanifest state with all embodied beings lies dormant for a considerable length of time in a fraction of God as a deposit. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of Himself as the 'Nidhāna' or store-house.

That which knows no destruction or decay, and never ceases to be, is called 'Avyaya' or imperishable. God is the imperishable cause of all sentient and insentient beings. All beings emanate from Him; He is the ultimate substratum of all. It is therefore that the Lord calls Himself the 'imperishable seed'. In VII.10, He similarly declares Himself to be the 'eternal seed of all beings', and again in X.39 He calls Himself 'the seed of all beings'.

Although the word 'Aham' (I) has been repeated with every object mentioned in verse 16 and has been employed at least once in verse 17 as well, the Lord does not use it even once in the present verse. The reason is not far to seek. Words like 'Kratu', 'Yajña,' 'Svadhā', 'Auṣadha', 'Mantra', 'Ājya', 'Ṛk', 'Yajuṣ' etc., used in the preceding verses, are naturally such as to denote objects other than God. Therefore, in order to show His identity with those things, the Lord used the world 'Aham' (I) in connection with them. All the words occurring in the present verse, however, are attributes of God; moreover, the word 'Aham' used in the preceding verse is connected with this verse as well. Therefore, it was unnecessary to repeat the word 'Aham' in the present verse.

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च।
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन॥ १९॥

अहम् I (Myself); तपामि radiate heat (as the sun); वर्षम् rainfall; निगृह्णामि hold back; च as well as; उत्सृजामि send forth; अर्जुन O Arjuna; अहम् I (Myself); अमृतम् (am) immortality; च and; मृत्युः death; च and; सत् असत् being (as well as) non-being; च also; अहम् (am) I; एव alone.

I radiate heat as the sun, and hold back as well as send forth showers, Arjuna. I am immortality as well as death; even so I am being and non-being both. (19)

By the first half of the verse the Lord indicates that the sun as well, which imparts through its rays light and heat to the world, and sucking water in the form of vapour from the ocean and other reservoirs of water, holds it in the atmosphere, and then, in due course, sends it down for the good of the world in due proportion in the form of showers, is His own Self.

'Amṛta' is that which takes one beyond the realm of death and makes one immortal. The nectar which is said to be obtained in the heaven-world, and a drink of which renders the celestials immune from death as it is known on this earth, does not however make them absolutely proof against destruction. The supreme nectar which brings complete security from destruction is God Himself, whose realization makes one secure for all time from the scourge of death. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of Himself as 'immortality, and it is for this very reason that liberation from birth and death is also known as 'immortality'.

The destructive principle which makes an end of all is called 'death'. Both creation and destruction are supremely necessary for the proper functioning of the worldprocess, and both these acts are performed by the sportive Lord. It is He who abides in the form of Mahākāla (the supreme Spirit of Destruction) for bringing about the destruction of all the worlds when the time comes for it. The Lord Himself says in verse XI.32: "I am the inflamed Kāla the destroyer of the worlds." It is therefore that He declares 'death' to be His very self.

The imperishable Self, which never ceases to be, is known as 'Sat' (Being); and all that is perishable and transient goes by the name of 'Asat' (non-being) (II.16). It is these two categories that have been referred to in Chapter XV as the 'Akṣara' and 'Kṣara' Puruṣas, or the imperishable and perishable entities. It is these two, again, which constitute the Parā and Aparā Prakṛtis, or the higher and lower Natures of God, which are identical with God. It is therefore that the Lord declares Himself as being and non-being both.

The indeclinable 'Ca' immediately following the words 'Sat' and 'Asat' indicates that Brahma, which transcends being and non-being both (XI.37), and which lies beyond the connotation of the words 'Sat' and 'Asat', is also identical with God.

Describing in verses 13 to 15 the various forms of worship of both, His Saguṇa and Nirguṇa aspects, the Lord brought out in verses 16 to 19 His identity with the whole universe. Now that this is established, it stands to reason that the worship of Indra and other celestials too indirectly constitutes His own worship. But those who, instead of realizing this, worship these latter gods as other than the supreme Deity and with their mind attached to the reward of such worship, fail to realize God and obtain only perishable results from such worship. In order to show this, the Lord now devotes the next two verses to a description of such worship with its fruit.

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते।
ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोकमश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान्॥ २०॥

त्रैविद्याः those who perform action with some interested motive as laid down in the three Vedas; सोमपाः those who drink the sap of the Soma plant; पूतपापाः those who have been purged of their sin; माम् Me; यज्ञैः through (the performance of) sacrifices; इष्ट्वा worshipping; स्वर्गतिम् access to heaven; प्रार्थयन्ते aspire for; ते those (persons); पुण्यम् obtained as reward for their meritorious deeds; सुरेन्द्रलोकम् Indra's realm of paradise; आसाद्य attaining; दिवि in heaven; दिव्यान् celestial; देवभोगान् pleasures of gods; अश्नन्ति enjoy.

Those who perform action with some interested motive as laid down in these three Vedas and drink the sap of the Soma plant, and have thus been purged of sin, worshipping Me through sacrifices, seek access to heaven; attaining Indra's paradise as the result of their virtuous deeds, they enjoy the celestial pleasures of gods in heaven. (20)

The three Vedas called by the names of Ṛk, Sāma and Yajuṣ and collectively known as the 'Vedatrayī' or 'Trīvidyā' And the word 'Traividyāḥ' refers to those who are devoted and attached to the letter of the three Vedaṣ, *i.e.*, to the details of sacrifices as mentioned in the three Vedas and their fruit, and are given to the performance of such

sacrifices. Similarly the word 'Somapāḥ' stands for those who drink the juice of the Soma plant according to the rules laid down in the scriptures for the potation of such juice in the source of sacrifices. Even so those who have been purged of sins that stand as an impediment to the attainment of heaven, through the proper performance of such Vedic rituals, are referred to here by the word 'Pūtapāpāḥ'. All these terms refer to that class of men who are ignorant of the universal form of God, who are devoted to and fond of the Vedic ritual and avoiding sinful acts habitually perform acts of sacrifice with an interested motive and in accordance with the scriptural injunctions.

The word 'Pūtapāpāḥ' cannot be taken to mean those whose sins have been completely washed away. For the next verse speaks of their returning to the world of mortals on the exhaustion of the stock of their merits. Had all their sins been eradicated, they ought to have attained liberation the very moment their stock of merits got exhausted. For when the stock of both sin and virtue has been exhausted, no more cause for rebirth remains. Under such circumstances no question of rebirth should arise in their case. But the next verse definitely states that they return to this world; therefore, the interpretation of the word given above seems to be quite correct.

The word 'Mām' in this verse stands for Indra and other celestials, who constitute the limbs of God. Worshipping these gods with faith through sacrificial performances and other forms of worship according to the procedure laid down in the scriptures is what is meant by 'worshipping Me through sacrifices'. The intention of the Lord is to show that Indra and the other gods being His own limbs, worship offered to them indirectly constitutes His own worship. But due to ignorance, men who are prompted by interested motives do not recognize this truth. That is why they fail to realize God.

Attainment of heaven is called 'Svargati'. Worshipping the gods through Vedic rituals and praying to them for granting an abode in heaven is what is meant by 'seeking access to heaven'.

The word 'Surendralokam', with the adjective 'Puṇyam' qualifying it, has been used to indicate all the celestial worlds, from the abode of Indra or the third heaven to the abode of Brahmā or the seventh heaven, that are attained as the fruit of meritorious deeds like the performance of sacrifices etc. Though strictly speaking it refers to the abode of Indra only, it should therefore be understood to cover here all the worlds stated above. Reaching those worlds as a reward for their meritorious deeds, and tasting both through their mind and senses the pleasures of the gods, which cannot be obtained on earth, is what is meant by 'enjoying the heavenly pleasures of gods'.

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति।
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते॥ २१॥

ते they; तम् that; विशालम् extensive; स्वर्गलोकम् heaven-world; भुक्त्वा having enjoyed; पुण्ये क्षीणे on (the stock of) their merit being exhausted; मर्त्यलोकम् the world of mortals; विशन्ति return to; एवम् thus; त्रयीधर्मम् the ritual (with interested motive) recommended by the three Vedas (as leading to heaven); अनुप्रपन्नाः devoted to; कामकामाः those seeking (worldly) enjoyments; गतागतम् लभन्ते repeatedly come and go (*i.e.,* ascend to heaven by virtue of their merits and return to earth when their fruit has been enjoyed).

Having enjoyed the extensive heaven-world, they return to this world of mortals on the stock of their merits being exhausted. Thus devoted to the ritual with interested motive recommended by the three Vedas (as the means of attaining heavenly bliss), and seeking worldly enjoyments, they repeatedly come and go (*i.e.*, ascend to heaven by virtue of their merits and return to earth when their fruit has been enjoyed). (21)

In comparison with the terrestrial world the dimensions of the celestial regions, the extent and variety of the enjoyments obtained there, the degree of their pleasurableness, the bodily and mental capacity to enjoy them and the highest limit of longevity reached there, are all immeasurable larger and longer. It is in this sense that the heaven-world has been spoken of as 'extensive'.

When the fruit of the merits, for the enjoyment of which one goes to heaven, has been enjoyed, it is said that the stock of one's merits has got exhausted. And as soon as the stock of such merits is exhausted the Jīva who once possessed them is hurled back to the mortal world to enjoy the fruit of his remaining virtues and sins. This is what is meant by his 'returning to this mortal world'.

The word 'Trayīdharmam' stands for the aggregate of ritual acts recommended in the three Vedas—Ṛk, Yajuṣ and Sāma— as a means to the attainment of heaven. Duly observing such practices, and regarding the enjoyments of heaven as the highest object of life, is what is meant by being devoted to 'Trayīdharma'.

Men with an interested motive, who are ignorant of the truth about God, fail to surrender themselves to God with an undivided mind, and swayed by their desire for enjoyment take recourse to the form of Dharma stated above. It is therefore that the fruit of their actions is transitory, and it is for this reason that they have to return to the mortal world. But those, who having given up dependence on these practices, leading to the enjoyments of heaven, take refuge in God and God alone, succeed in realizing Him and thereby attain complete freedom from all forms of bondage. It is therefore that these men, having accomplished the object of their life, are never born in this world again.

In verses 13 and 14, the Lord described the mode of devotion practised by loving devotees who possess a knowledge of His imperishable Self. In verse 15 while referring to the worship of the Absolute through the practice of Jñānayoga, as well as to the worship, carried on in other ways, of celestials like the sun-god, the moon-god, the gods of fire etc., who are so many limbs as it were of god in His Universal Form, He pointed out that such worship also constituted His worship. Thereafter, in verses 16 to 19 He showed that he was manifested not only in the form of those celestials, but also in the form of all the materials with which worship is offered to Him, and that He is the father, mother, grandfather, sustainer and ruler of the universe. Not only that, He is being and non-being both. Showing thus the universal character of His Self, He declared in verses 20 and 21 that those who worship Him in the form of the celestials, with some interested motive, recognizing the separate existence of gods, are virtuous men no doubt, but that having tasted the enjoyments in heaven they have to return to the mortal world, and cannot attain His imperishable state. He now declares the fruit of devotion practised by devotees who have already been referred to in verses 13 and 14, and which could not be stated owing to the insertion of other topics.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्॥ २२॥

ये who; अनन्याः loving none else; जनाः devotees; माम् Me (the supreme Deity); चिन्तयन्तः (constantly) dwelling on; पर्युपासते worship in a disinterested spirit; तेषाम् नित्याभियुक्तानाम् of those ever united in thought (with Me); योगक्षेमम् supplying needs and safeguarding interests; अहम् I; वहामि arrange.

The devotees, however, who loving no one else constantly think of Me, and worship Me in a disinterested spirit, to those ever united in thought with Me, I bring full security and personally attend to their needs. **(22)**

The word 'Ananyāḥ' refers to those faithful devotees who having withdrawn their attachment from all forms of enjoyment of the world have bestowed their love unshakably and irrevocably on God and God alone, to whom separation from God is quite unbearable, who acknowledge no other deity than God, and who recognize God alone as their supreme asylum, supreme goal and supreme object of love.

The word 'Mām' (Me) in this verse stands for God with attributes, or the Supreme Person (Puruṣottama) as the Gītā calls Him. Realizing His virtues, glory, truth and secret, and thinking of Him constantly without any break even while walking or moving about, standing or sitting, awake or asleep, or while practising meditation in seclusion, he who carries on all his activities in a disinterested spirit as a behest from God and for His pleasure, is said to 'worship Him while constantly thinking of Him'.

'Yoga' menas obtaining what is unobtained; while 'Kṣema' indicates the preservation of what has been already obtained. Ensuring his protection against all possible odds and risks and preserving whatever materials or resources necessary for God-realization are already acquired by the devotee and supplying his further needs in that direction, the Lord brings him face to face with His reality. This is what is meant by 'carrying on the Yogakṣema of His devotees'. The life of Prahlāda serves as a beautiful illustration of this truth. Even though his father, Hiraṇyakaśipu, placed mighty obstacles in his way, the Lord gave him protection under every circumstance, and in the end brought him face to face with His reality.

One may ask here: Does the Lord also personally attend to the earthly needs of his devotees and protect his worldly possession as well ? It should be remembered in this connection that it is the Lord Himself who maintains and supports the numberless beings, great and small, of the whole universe. Caring little whether one adores Him or not, the Lord carries on His shoulders the entire responsibility of maintaining the whole universe with the natural feelings of highest love and affection. When such is the case, there is no wonder that He should undertake the responsibility of maintaining those who are exclusively devoted to Him. The fact is that God Himself holds the entire charge of looking after those devotees who remain constantly engaged in His thought alone, and are little concerned about anything else than God.

To take a homely illustration, a small babe who entirely depends upon its mother knows no one else than her and never worries as to which of its things should be looked after, and as to what it will need at a particular moment. It is the look-out of

the mother to see which of its things should be preserved with care: it is she who forsees what will be needed for the babe at a particular moment; and it is the mother, again who looks after its things, and makes necessary provison for it at the right moment. Even so in the case of him who is exclusively devoted to God and constantly united in thought with Him, it is God alone who determines what is needed by him and which of his worldly or spiritual possessions need be preserved; and it is He again who looks after his possessions and also supplies his needs.

So long as a child continues to be in the charge of its mother and entirely depends on her, the mother pays little heed to its judgment and does that which is conducive to its real interests. Even so, and much more than that, God does precisely that wherein lies the real good of the devotee. It is God who determines what will be necessary for a devotee of the type mentioned above at a particular time, and what should be preserved for him; and the judgment of God is always full of blessings for the devotee. And it is God who bears the responsibility for the protection of his interests and for securing what is unobtained by him. The disinction between worldly and other-worldly interests is not the point at issue here, nor are we concerned here with the acquisition of this thing or that. One's true interest lies in the non-acquisition and non-possession of things whose acquisition or possession makes one forgetful of God and addicted to the enjoyments of the world, and which therefore really mars one's interests. Even so a devotee's real good lies in the acquisition and preservation of things whose absence or neglect interferes with the remembrance of God, and thus stands in the way of his attaining real blessedness and mars his real interests.

The statement that God Himself bears on His shoulders the responsibility of conferring true blessedness on, and serving the best interests of, the devotee, means that bearing in mind what things obtained or preserved will bring him lasting good, it is God Himself who secures or preserves such things for the devotee, no matter whether they are connected with his earthly life, or with his spiritual practice.

This should make it definitely clear that the entire responsibility even for the livelihood of the devotee who solely depends on God, and does everything with his mind constantly and exclusively engaged in His loving remembrance, and who neither craves nor depends upon, nor even thinks of anything else, lies on God. The almighty, omniscient, all-seeing God, who is the greatest friend of the devotee, looks after him in every way. Hence there can be no error in supplying his needs or protecting his possessions, nor can His dispensation lead to any contrary result. The dispensation of God in his case brings him joy and peace, fills him with love, and is supremely helpful in bringing him face to face with God without delay. That is why the word 'Yoga' has been interpreted as meaning God-realization, and the word 'Kṣema' as meaning preservation of the means for such Realization.

It has been stated above that the whole responsibility in respect of the devotee who adores God with an exclusive mind is borne by God Himself. The Lord now declares that the Sādhakas who worship other deities with some interested motive, treating them as other than the supreme Deity, worship Him with a mistaken approach.

येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ २३ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kunti, Arjuna; अपि even (though); श्रद्धया with faith; अन्विताः endowed; ये भक्ताः the devotees (with interested motives) who; अन्यदेवताः other deities; यजन्ते worship; ते they; अपि even; माम् Me; एव alone; यजन्ति worship; अविधिपूर्वकम् (though) with a mistaken approach.

Arjuna, even those devotees who, endowed with faith, worship other gods (with some interested motive) worship Me alone, though with a mistaken approach. (23)

The words 'Śraddhayā Anvitāḥ' refer to those who possess a devout and unwavering faith in the gods enumerated in the Vedas, in the worship of those gods and in the fruit of such worship in the form of attainment of heaven etc. The use of these qualifying words is intended to convey that those who worship the deities mentioned above through sacrificial performances and other such acts without faith and for mere show cannot be included in this category. They fall under the category of those who are possessed of the demoniac temperament (XVI.17; XVII.13).

Worshipping with faith, through sacrificial and other acts recommended in the scriptures, a particular god whose worship had been enjoined in the Śāstras for the satisfaction of a particular desire,—this is what is meant by worshipping other gods. Those who fail to realize the truth that the various deities are but limbs of the one supreme Deity, who is the Lord of all, and that really speaking it is God who is manifested in the form of those deities, and who worship them with some interested motive, treating them as other than God, are said to 'worship God with a mistaken approach'.

On the other hand, those who worship the various deities with reverence in a disinterested spirit and in accordance with the procedure laid down in the scriptures with the motive of God-realization, treating them as so many manifestations of the supreme Deity, inasmuch as they are all limbs of the supreme Being, are said to worship God in the right spirit through the worship of those deities. The fruit of such worship is also God-realization.

Treating even strangers as manifestations of God, King Rantideva served them with food, enduring the pangs of hunger himself, and thus offered disinterested worship to God. As the fruit of such worship, he succeeded in realizing God. Similarly, whosoever offers service to the celestials, one's preceptor, the Brāhmaṇa a guest, a stranger, one's parents and all other beings for the pleasure of God and as a behest from God, treating them as identical with Him really serves God in the right spirit through that service, and the fruit of such service is also God-realization.

He who duly worships the other deities with faith and love, though with some interested motive, without realizing the above truth, really worships God alone: for it is God alone who is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and the supreme Lord of all, and because it is He who is manifested in every form. Nevertheless, lacking as it does in the right spirit, such worship is not recognized as the right method of worshipping God. It is for this reason that instead of bringing God-realization in its wake, such worship brings only the enjoyments of heaven as its fruit. This vast difference in the concomitant result is brought about due to ignorance about the reality of God.

Showing thus that the worshippers of other deities worship Him with a mistaken approach, the Lord now explains why such worshippers fail to realize God.

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च।
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते॥ २४॥

हि because; सर्वयज्ञानाम् of all sacrifices; भोक्ता the enjoyer; च and; प्रभुः the lord; च as well; अहम् (am) I; एव alone; तु but; ते they; माम् Me (the supreme Deity); तत्त्वेन in reality; न not; अभिजानन्ति know; अतः hence; च्यवन्ति fall (are subjected to rebirth).

For I am the enjoyer and also the lord of all sacrifices; but they know Me not is reality (as the supreme Deity), hence they fall (*i.e.,* return to life on earth). (24)

Inasmuch as it is God Himself who is manifested in the form of this universe, the various gods, who are recognized as the enjoyers of the different rituals in the form of sacrifice, worship and so on, are so many limbs of God, and God Himself is the soul of them all (X.20). Therefore, it is God Himself who enjoys the various sacrifices and other sacred rites. It is God Himself who creates, sustains and destroys the whole universe through His power of Yoga, and duly regulates all. He is the ruler of Indra (the lord of paradise), Varuṇa (the god of water), Yama (the god of death), Prajāpati (the deity presiding over creation), and all other regional lords and celestials. Hence He is the supreme Lord of all created beings (V.29).

The indeclinable 'Tu' has been used here to denote antithesis. It is intended to emphasize the colossal ignorance of those who fail to recognize the glory of God not withstanding His being the enjoyer of all sacrifices and the supreme Lord of all.

The word 'Te' (they) refers to men with interested motives who worship God, though with a mistaken approach, through worship of the celestials as described in the preceding verse. And failure to recognize God as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and the supreme Lord of all the worlds, due to ignorance about His reality combined with His virtues and glory as described in verses 16 to 19 above, is what is meant by 'not knowing Him in reality'.

The word 'Ataḥ' is indicative of cause. The use of the verb 'Cyavanti' with it shows that due to the cause mentioned above, that is, due to want of knowledge about the truth of God, the worshippers of gods referred to above fail to attain the highest fruit in the form of God-realization, and gaining the comparatively insignificant reward in the shape of enjoyments of heaven remain tied to the whirligig of births and deaths.

The devotees of God are no longer subject to birth and death, whereas the worshippers of other deities remain subject to this law. What is the reason for this ? Anticipating this query the Lord now says:—

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितॄन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम्॥ २५॥

देवव्रताः those who are vowed to the gods; देवान् to the gods; यान्ति go; पितृव्रताः those who are vowed to the manes; पितॄन् the manes; यान्ति reach; भूतेज्याः those who adore the spirits; भूतानि the spirits; यान्ति reach; मद्याजिनः (and) those who worship Me; माम् Me; अपि alone; यान्ति attain.

Those who are vowed to gods go to the gods; those who are vowed to the manes reach the manes; those who adore the spirits reach the spirits and those who worship Me come to Me alone. (That is why My devotees are no longer subject to birth and death). (25)

Worshiping the gods, observing the rules laid down for their worship, performing sacrifices in their honour, performing Japa of the Mantra sacred to them and feeding Brāhmaṇas for their propitiation, all these are known as vows for the propitiation of the Devas. Men who observe these vows are referred to here as 'Devavratāḥ'. And attaining as a reward for such worship the abode of these gods and obtaining enjoyments similar to those enjoyed by them, or attaining a celestial form resembling the form of such gods—all this is denoted by the phrase 'going to the gods'.

In III.11 and IV.25 worship of the gods has been declared as conducive to blessedness' whereas verses 20, 21, 24 and 25 of this chapter show that such worship leads only to the attainment of the transient heaven-world and throws the Jīva into the whirlpool of birth and death. Though on the face of it these statements appear quite contradictory, there is really speaking no contradiction between them. The fact of the matter is that Chapter III and IV of the Gītā speak of worshipping the gods in a disinterested spirit, hence such worship has been declared to be conducive to the highest good; for worship of gods carried on in a disinterested spirit makes for purification of the heart and is thereby conducive to the highest good. But the worship of gods referred to in these verses is one that is performed with an interested motive. Hence such worship cannot be said to yield anything more than the attainment of gods. The highest reward that such worship can confer upon the worshippers is residence in the abode of those gods till their life-time. Therefore, their return to the mortal world is inevitable.

Similarly, performing the sacred rites of Śrāddha and Tarpaṇa (*i.e.*, offering food and water respectively) in honour of one's departed ancestors, feeding Brāhmaṇas, offering oblations to the sacred fire and performing Japa, recitation and worship for their sake and observing vows and rules of conduct enjoined by the scriptures for their propitiation—all these are included in the worship of the manes. And men who adopt these practices for the sake of the manes are referred to here as 'Pitṛvratāh'. Those who perform these ritual acts with an interested motive migrate after their death to the world of the manes and assuming the form of the manes taste the enjoyments of that region. This is what is meant by 'going to the manes'. The maximum reward that one can get through these practices is to dwell in the abode of the manes till the life-time of the lords of that world. In the long run, however, one is bound to return to this world.

The verse should not be interpreted as discouraging the worship of the gods and manes. Such worship needs must be performed by all with due ceremony consistent with one's Varṇa or grade in society and Āśrama or stage in life. Of course, if it is done with some interested motive, it will disappear after yielding the maximum reward; if, on the other hand, it is performed by way of duty as a behest from God, and in the spirit of offering worship to Him, it becomes instrumental in bringing the supreme reward in the form of God-realization. Therefore, this verse should be understood to mean that while one must perform the worship of gods and manes, an attempt should be made to cultivate the disinterested spirit with regard

to such worship.

The word 'Bhūtejyāḥ' stands for those who worship ghosts and spirits duly observing the rules of such worship, offer oblations into the sacred fire or practise charity etc., with a view to propitiating the spirits. Attaining the form of such spirits and obtaining enjoyments appropriate to them is what is meant by 'going to the spirits.' The worship of ghosts and spirits is Tāmasika in character, and leads only to unwelcome results. Therefore, one can never be encouraged to indulge in this form of worship.

The word 'Madyājinaḥ' refers to those devotees who worship, adore and meditate on God with attributes, either with or without form, practise Japa of His Name, hear His glories and sing them, and adopt various other practices of devotion. And attaining His divine abode, living in close proximity with Him, assuming a divine form or absorption in Him—all this is meant by attaining God.

To say nothing of the devotee who worships God with or without form in a disinterested spirit, even he who adores Him with an interested motive attains Him. This is what is indicated by the use of the indeclinable 'Api' at the end of this verse.

Though devotion to God confers on the devotee the highest boon in the form of God-realization, its practice, far from being difficult, is exceptionally easy. In order to show this, the Lord says:—

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ २६ ॥

यः whosoever; **मे** to Me; **भक्त्या** with love; **पत्रम्** a leaf; **पुष्पम्** a flower; **फलम्** a fruit; **तोयम्** water (etc.); **प्रयच्छति** offers; **प्रयतात्मनः** by that disinterested devotee of sinless mind; **भक्त्युपहृतम्** offered with love; **तत्** that (article); **अहम्** I; **अश्नामि** partake of (with delight, appearing in person before him).

Whosoever offers to Me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water, I appear in person before that disinterested devotee of sinless mind, and delightfully partake of that article offered by him with love. (26)

By using the word 'Yaḥ' (whosoever) in this connection, the Lord indicated that anyone and everyone can offer Him leaves, flowers, fruits, and water etc., no matter to which caste or community he belongs and whatever his Āśrama or stage in life. The Lord does not discriminate between one individual and another on the ground of physical prowess, external appearance, wealth, age, birth, merits and learning etc. The only condition is that the sentiment of the devotee who offers these things should be absolutely pure and loving like that of Vidura and Śabarī, to quote two notable examples.

The mention of leaves, flowers, fruits and water as articles of worship indicates that anything which can be easily had even by an ordinary individual without any exertion or expenditure can be offered to God. Having all His desires fulfilled, God does not thirst for this thing or that. He thirsts only for love. And he who offers something to God with a heart overflowing with love and filled with gratitude to think how magnanimous it is of the Lord that He should condescend to accept with pleasure even the smallest gift from the hands of an humble creature like the offerer, offered with love.

He whose mind is pure is called a Prayatātmā. By using this word, the Lord indicates that if the motive of the offerer is not pure, He does not accept the offering in any case, even if the same is offered with an outward show of extreme politeness and consists of the best articles. Declining the invitation of Duryodhana, He called on Vidura, and fondly dined at his house simply because the latter had a pure heart. He partook of the parched rice brought by Sudāmā with great relish, satiated the whole universe by putting into His mouth a stray leaf left in the cooking utensil of Draupadī, accepted with His own lotus hands the flower offered by the famous elephant figuring in the Purāṇas, appearing in person before him, partook of the fruits offered by Śabarī at her own cottage and blessed Rantideva by accepting the water offered by him. In this way He accepts with pleasure whatever offering is made by a devotee with a heart full of love.

Incidents from the life of these devotees, relevant to the subject under discussion in particular, are briefly reproduced below:—

VIDURA

After completing twelve years exile in the forest and one year's incognito existence when the Pāṇḍavas demanded of Duryodhana the restoration of their kingdom, the latter gave a flat refusal. Thereupon Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself went to the Kaurava Court to negotiate on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas. To maintain an outward show of courtesy on that occasion, Duryodhana had made elaborate preparations for the reception of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When invited to dinner, the Lord refused to dine with him. Questioned by Duryodhana as to the reason for this refusal, the Lord gave the following reply. "Meals are taken under two circumstances," He said, "Where there is love, one partakes of, with great pleasure, whatever is available in the house. Or, when one is starving, one has to fill the belly with whatever is available anywhere, regardless of the sentiment with which the food may be served. Both these conditions are absent in the present case. You have no love in you, and I am not dying of hunger either." With these words the Lord left his royal palace and proceeded uninvited to Vidura's cottage. The good old Bhīṣma and elders like Droṇa, Kṛpa, Bāhlīka and others called at Vidura's and invited the Lord to their own houses. But the Lord refused to go anywhere else, and blessed Vidura by partaking of the dishes offered by him with the utmost love (*vide Mahābhārata, Udyoga Parva, 91*). So runs the popular Indian song:—

"Refusing the rich dishes of Duryodhana, the Lord partook of boiled vegetables at Vidura's."

SUDĀMĀ

Sudāmā had been a school-fellow of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Both had received their schooling at Ujjain under a common teacher Sāndīpani. Sudāmā was wellversed in the Vedas, averse to worldly enjoyments, calm and collected and a man of exemplary self-restraint. After completing their studies the two friends parted company and left for their respective homes.

Sudāmā was extremely indigent and poor so far as material possessions are concerned. On a certain occasion this Brāhmaṇa with his family had to starve continuously for a number of days due to want of food. Emaciated by starvation, the wife of Sudāmā was extremely moved by the miserable plight of her children. She knew that the Lord of Dvārakā, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, was a friend of her husband. After a good deal of hesitation, therefore, and trembling with fear, she described her

sufferings to her husband and requested him to proceed to Dvārakā. She knew equally well that her husband was absolutely disinterested; therefore she added, "My lord, I know you have no craving for riches; but without money it is very difficult to maintain a household, therefore, in my opinion, it is essential and desirable too that you should go and see your friend."

Sudāmā understood that unnerved by her privations his wife was anxious to send him to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in search of wealth. He, however, had serious misgivings in approaching his friend with such a request, and reproached her saying, 'Good heavens ! Are you so mad as to send me to Dvārakā to fetch money ? Does a true Brāhmaṇa ever crave for wealth ? Our only concern is to remember the Lord under all circumstances. When oppressed by hunger, can we not go out and beg our food ?"

"All this is very well," said Sudāmā's wife; "but the days are so hard that one cannot even depend on the charity of others. Just have a look at my tattered clothes and these starving children of yours. I have no craving for wealth. I do not insist that you should ask Him for a kingdom, or for abundant riches. In our present stricken condition, you should only go and see him once." Hesitating for a long time Sudāmā at last decided to go; for he thought that would afford him a golden opportunity to obtain the rare sight of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But how could he go without taking some present for his friend ? "O blessed lady," he said to his wife, "If you have anything in the house worthy of being presented to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, please let me have it." Sudāmā's request was quite reasonable; but the poor woman was helpless. There was not a single grain of rice in the house. Sudāmā's wife, therefore, kept quiet. But she knew her husband would not leave his house unless he was provided with something. Therefore, with great diffidence she approached her next-door neighbour. Although she had little hope from her, the lady of the house was good enough to lend her four handfuls of parched rice. Tying these few handfuls of rice in a dirty piece of tattered cloth, the poor woman handed it over to her husband as a present for Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Sudāmā reached the city of Dvārakā after a long and tiresome journey. After repeated enquiries, he at last found himself at the portals of the right royal mansion of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The poet Narottama gives in Hindi a beautiful word-picture of what followed. According to him, the porter received the stranger kindly and offering him a seat at the gate, the former went into the presence of the Lord and gave Him the following report:—

"My Lord; a stranger waits at the door:
From where he hails, no one knows.
No turban on his head, nor garment on his persons;
His loin-cloth is torn, the toga poor;
No shoes he has to cover his feet.
The poor, emaciated Brāhmaṇa that he appears to be
Came and stood at the gate,
Looking at the beauty of the city with wondering eyes.
The abode of the destitutes' friend he enquires about,
And calls himself Sudāmā."

Hearing the very name of 'Sudāmā', the Lord forgot Himself and hurriedly got up from His seat. The crown was left uncared for, the yellow robe dropped from his body, He could not find time even to put on His sandals and rushed towards the gate. Seeing the miserable plight of Sudāmā from a distance, the Lord said:—

"O friend, what a helpless condition you have been reduced to !"

Then the Lord noticed the network of thorns
Sticking at the soles of Sudāmā's feet.
Alas ! friend, what a terrible suffering you have undergone !
Why did you not turn up here before ?
Why did you waste so many days ?"
At the sight of Sudāmā's destitution,
The Ocean of Compassion wept with grief.
The water kept for washing the feet of Sudāmā was not even touched.
He washed them with His own profuse tears !
(*Narottama*)

There was no occasion to touch the water kept in the large brazen-vessel for washing the feet of Sudāmā. Washing them with the tears of His eyes, the Lord held His friend tight to His bosom. Thereafter He took him with great attention inside His palace and seated him on His own couch. Collecting the articles of worship with His own hands, the Lord duly washed Sudāmā's feet Himself; and even though His very presence hallowed the three worlds, He bore that water on His own head. The Lord's principal consort, Śrī Rukmiṇī, also expressed her desire to wash the feet of their honoured guest. The Lord readily gave his consent saying; "Let the other queens also come and wash his feet, and sprinkling the water touched by his feet over the entire palace, let them purify the palace as well as their body and mind." Holding in one hand a vase of gold filled with water, Śrī Rukmiṇī thereupon washed Sudāmā's feet with other.

"Lo ! She whom the gods ever address
As the mother of the universe, and redeemer of the world,
They look upon Her today washing the feet of a destitute."

Smearing the body of His beloved friend with an excellent quality of sandalpaste and other scented articles, such as the paste of aloe wood and saffron, and offering him incense and light, the Lord treated him to a sumptuous meal and offered him betelleaves and pieces of nuts. Sudāmā's body was badly soiled with dust and emaciated. The veins and arteries of his body had stuck out at various places. A piece of tattered cloth covered his body. But recognizing him to be a dear friend of her Lord, Rukmiṇī who was no other than Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth, fondly waited with all her associates on the utterly destitute Brāhmaṇa holding in her hands a fan and a chowrie with bejewelled handles. Clasping Sudāmā's hands, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa began to review the charming incidents of their boyhood.

After some time, the Lord cast a loving gaze at Sudāmā, and with a smile on His lips asked him whether he had brought any present for Him. "I hold in high esteem," He added, "even the most insignificant thing lovingly offered to Me by a devotee; for I hunger for love. On the other hand, immense treasures offered by one who does not possess devotion in his heart cannot satisfy Me."

Even after this clear hint from the Lord, Sudāmā could not part with the bundle of parched rice he had so fondly brought with him. Seeing the royal grandeur and untold wealth of the Lord, he felt very shy in exhibiting that poor article. The Lord, who knows the innermost secret of all hearts, had no difficulty in divining the cause of his visit, and said to Himself, "This Brāhmaṇa is a disinterested devotee and friend of Mine. He never adored Me with the motive of gaining wealth in the past, nor is he actuated by any such motive even now; that is why he is withholding from Me this present of parched rice. But he has come to Me at the request of his devoted wife; I shall accordingly confer on him that

wealth (in the shape of worldly enjoyments and liberation) which is difficult of access even to the celestials."

Having thus resolved and casting a searching glance into the bundle of parched rice held tightly by Sudāmā under his arm-pit, the Lord forcibly dislodged it from its secure position. Made of an old tattered cloth, the bundle gave way, scattering the contents on the floor.

Thereupon, in accents of deep love, the Lord said:—

"O friend, this loving present brought by you affords Me supreme delight. These parched rice will satisfy Me, and (with Me) the entire universe."*

So saying, the Lord started picking up the scattered grains of rice one by one, putting them into His mouth and masticating them. Partaking in this way of the offering lovingly brought by a devotee, the Lord gave an ocular demonstration of His incomparable love for the devotee.

Joyfully spending some days at Dvārakā in the blessed company of the Lord, Sudāmā at last returned to his home and found it totally transformed. By the sportive will of the Lord, his dilapidated cottage with a thatched roof containing many holes had given place to a palace with turrets of gold. Sudāmā accepted this as a pastime of the Lord. He said to himself, "How noble and praiseworthy it is of my divine Friend that He fulfils the desire of the seeker by bestowing on him all that he wants secretly without his knowledge. But I am no seeker of wealth. My one repeated prayer is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa may continue to be my well-wisher, friend and loving companion in all my lives, and I may remain exclusively devoted to Him. I have no craving for this wealth. What I care for is the purest form of devotion to the Lord, who is the repository of all virtues, and the blessed company of His devotees. It is an act of Grace of His part that He withholds wealth from us, for the pride of wealth brings about one's downfall. It is therefore that He does not confer worldly possessions, kingdom and supremacy on His shortsighted devotees."

'Sudāmā lived as a householder throughout his life, though he had no attachment for anything, and devoted all his time to the practice of adoration.

DRAUPADĪ

During their exile in the forest, the Pāṇḍavas were passing their period of privation and suffering; while the vile Duryodhana and his evil-minded associates, due to their inherent wickedness, were busy devising means for their extirpation. On a certain occasion, Duryodhana propitiated the sage Durvāsā by his services and asked for a boon. He said, "My elder cousin, the high-souled Yudhiṣṭhira, who is noted for his piety, is living in the forest with his brothers. Kindly accept his hospitality one day with all your pupils, ten thousand in number. I would, however, pray that you should call on him at a time when all have dined and when the blessed Draupadī has finished her meal and may be peacefully enjoying her day's rest." Acting under the advice of his designing ministers, Duryodhana thought that after Draupadī had taken her meal, the cooking utensil granted to her by the Sun-god could yield no more food. He thought that would excite the wrath of the irascible ascetic, who would reduce the Pāṇḍava to ashes by his curse, and the object for gaining which Duryodhana had been taking so much pains would thus be easily achieved. Durvāsā, who possessed a guileless heart, could not make

* नन्वेतदुपनीतं मे परमप्रीणनं सखे। तर्पयन्त्यङ्ग मां विश्वमेते पृथुकतण्डुलाः॥

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* X.lxxxi.9)

out the real motive of Duryodhana's request; he, therefore, readily granted it. Accordingly, one day, Durvāsā appeared in the Kāmyaka, a forest. Having had their meals, the Pāṇḍavas and their consort Draupadī were sitting at ease and chatting, when Durvāsā made his appearance with his battalion of ten thousand pupils. Yudhiṣṭhira and his four brothers rose from their seats to receive the honoured guest, and after paying their respects to him invited him to take his meal. Accepting their invitation, Durvāsā went to the river for a bath. Draupadī, however, felt much disturbed. But who could save her from an awkward predicament like the one in which she found herself except her dear friend, Śrī Kṛṣṇa ? Remembering the Lord, she said, "O Kṛṣṇa, O Divine Cowherd, O Refuge of the forlorn, O befriender of the refugee, You alone can rescue me from this calamity."

"Just as You delivered me the other day from the clutches of Duḥśāsana in an open assembly, even so You should extricate me from this difficulty."*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa happened to be with Rukmiṇī at that time in His palace at Dvārakā. Hearing the prayer of Draupadī, and knowing her to be in distress, the blessed Lord, who is so fond of His devotees, immediately left Rukmiṇī's side and ran post haste to meet Draupadī. The rapidity of motion of the Supreme Lord cannot be conceived by the human mind, there could, therefore, be no delay in His reaching the Kāmyaka forest. In a moment He was with Draupadī. Draupadī felt as if life had returned to her lifeless body. Greeting the Lord, she described to Him the predicament with which she was faced. "Tell Me all this afterwards," the Lord retorted, "I am terribly hungry; first, give Me something to eat." "I remembered You, my beloved Lord only because of my difficulty in procuring food. I have finished my meal, and there is nothing left in that vessel," rejoined Draupadī. The Lord, who is very jovial, could not be easily satisfied. He said:—

"Draupadī, I am oppressed by hunger and fatigue. I can brook no jest now. Make haste, bring the vessel presented to you by the sun-god, and show it to Me."†

Draupadī could not resist His entreaty any more. She brought the vessel and placed it before the Lord. The Lord's penetrating vision discovered a vegetable leaf sticking somewhere in the vessel. "Draupadī," He said, "You told Me there was nothing in the vessel; but this single leaf is enough to satisfy all the three worlds !" The Lord, who is the enjoyer of all sacrifices, immediately took out the leaf and putting it into His mouth said:—

"Let God, who is the soul of the universe and enjoyer of sacrifices, derive satisfaction from this leaf."‡

At the same time He asked Sahadeva to go and fetch the Ṛṣis for dinner.

Meantime a strange thing happened on the riverside. The ascetics had hardly finished their Sandhyā when they felt that their stomach had become suddenly loaded, and they began to belch. The pupils approached their preceptor and said, "Sir, we feel as if our stomach has been loaded up to the very throat. How shall we do justice to the invitation of the Pāṇḍavas ?" Durvāsā, who

* दुःशासनादहं पूर्वं सभायां मोचिता यथा। तथैव संकटादस्मान्मामुद्धर्तुमिहार्हसि॥

(*Mahā. Vana. 263.15*)

† कृष्णे न नर्मकालोऽयं क्षुच्छ्रमेणातुरे मयि। शीघ्रं गच्छ मम स्थालीमानयित्वा प्रदर्शय॥

(*Mahā. Vana. 263.23*)

‡ विश्वात्मा प्रीयतां देवस्तुष्टश्चास्त्विति यज्ञभुक्।

(*Mahā. Vana. 263.25*)

was going through the same strange experience himself, at once replied, "Dear ones, let us leave this place immediately. The Pāṇḍavas are extremely pious and learned, and men of great moral stamina; and they are exclusively devoted to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They can reduce us to ashes, if they take it into their head, even as a flame reduces a heap of cotton to ashes. My experience with Ambarīṣa is still fresh in my memory, and I am terribly afraid of the devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa." Hearing these words from the lips of Durvāsā, his pupils immediately dispersed and ran away in different directions. Sahadeva found none present on the river bank.

"Now let Me return to Dvārakā," said Śrī Kṛṣṇa to the Pāṇḍavas; "you are all virtuous souls. Those who are constantly devoted to virtuous conduct never suffer."*

THE LORD OF ELEPHANTS

The great tusker figuring in the Purāṇas lived on the Trikūṭa hill. Oppressed by the summer heat, he once reached the bank of a beautiful and extensive lake in the garden of Varuṇa (the god of water), called Ṛtumān, accompanied by a number of male and female elephants. He rushed into the lake and, having quaffed its sweet ambrosial water to his heart's content, began to sport in it with his female companions and their youngs. In that lake lived an alligator possessed of inordinate strength, who got hold of one of the feet of the lord of elephants. Exerting all his strength the latter tried to disengage his foot from the alligator's mortal grip, but without success. The alligator now began to drag the elephant into deep waters. All the male and female companions of the elephant tried hard to rescue their chief, joining trunk with trunk, and pulling the elephant in the direction of the bank; but in vain. The tug-of-war continued for a long time. Losing all hope, the lord of elephants at last sought refuge with the Lord. He said:—

"Like a mighty serpent, possessed of terrible speed, Death pursues all in every direction. God undoubtedly protects him who is afraid of this monster and seeks His protection from it. I, therefore, take refuge in Him; for it is out of His fear that this monster runs hither and thither in pursuit of mortals." (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata VIII.ii.33*)†

The lord of elephants mentally offered a beautiful prayer to God. His cry of anguish reached the ears of the Lord, who got impatient to save His devotee. A poet has depicted the incident very beautifully in the following words:—

"In order to rescue the lord of elephants caught in the deadly grip of the alligator Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa left His couch in nervous haste without caring for his attendants, unmindful of the Kaustubha gem, shouting for His club even before leaving the bed, without even looking at His Consort, Lakṣmī, and mounting the back of Garuḍa even without spreading anything on it. May He protect us!"‡

Riding on Garuḍa, the Lord reached the place of occurrence in no time. The Lord of elephants saw him ın the air mounted on the back of Garuḍa, and holding aloft a lotus with his trunk said in a sinking voice in extreme agony, "O Nārāyaṇa, O Supreme Master, I offer obeisance to You."

---

* धर्मनित्यास्तु ये केचिन्न ते सीदन्ति कर्हिचित्॥ (*Mahā. Vana. 263.44*)

† यः कश्चनेशो बलिनोऽन्तकोरगात् प्रचण्डवेगादभिधावतो भृशम् ।
भीतं प्रपन्नं परिपाति यद्भयान्मृत्युः प्रधावत्यरणं तमीमहि ॥ (*Śrīmad Bhā. 8.2.33*)

‡ पर्यङ्कं विसृजन् गणानगणयन् भूषामणिं विस्मरन्नुत्तानोऽपि गदागदेति निगदन् पद्मामनालोकयन्।
निर्गच्छन्नपरिच्छदं खगपतिं चारोहमाणोऽवतु ग्राहग्रस्तमतङ्गपुङ्गवसमुद्धाराय नारायणः॥

The Lord accepted the lotus offered by the devotee with love, and severing the head of the alligator with His circular weapon, Sudarśana, delivered the tusker from a great peril.

ŚABARĪ

Śabarī was a Bhil woman. Though low-born, she was a great devotee of the Lord. She had spent a large part of her life in rendering secret services to the sages living in the Daṇḍaka forest. Sweeping the track through which the sages passed for their daily bath, covering plots with a rugged surface with sand, cutting wood from the forest and piling it up in the hermitage—these were the self-imposed duties she had adopted by way of her daily routine. A sage, Mataṅga by name, took pity on her, imparted the holy name to her, and while departing for the abode of Brahma told her that Bhagavān Śrī Rāma would grace her with a visit to her cottage and that His very sight would fulfil the object of her life. Till then he asked her to remain at that place in expectation of that auspicious moment, keeping herself engaged in the practice of adoration.

Śabarī's mind got addicted to Bhajana, and she began to spend her days in anxious expectation of Śrī Rāma's visit. Her expectancy began to grow in intensity as the days rolled on. Expecting the Lord every moment, and fearing lest thorns might prick the soles of His feet, she would every now and then go and sweep the track leading to her cottage up to a long distance and sprinkle it with water. She would plaster the courtyard with cow-dung and mud and prepare a beautiful dais of cow-dung and earth for the Lord to sit on. Resorting to the woods she would pluck the most delicious fruits avaiable there and keep them in cups made of leaves. She would repeat this process from day to day. There was no knowing how many times in the course of a day she swept the path, plastered the courtyard, prepared seats and plucked fruits. At last, one day, the Lord visited Śabarī's cottage. Śabarī's joy knew no bounds. It will not be out of place to reproduce in this connections the scene as depicted in the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa:—

"Finding Śrī Rāma in her cottage, the heart of Śabarī gladdened; she rejoiced to find sage Mataṅga's prediction come true. He had lotus-like eyes, unusually long arms, a crown of matted hair on His head, and a garland of sylvan flowers on His bosom. Seeing Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who were distinguishable by their swarthy and white complexion respectively. Śabarī fell prostrate on the ground encircling their feet within her arms. Overwhelmed with love, she found herself tongue-tied. Again and again she bowed her head at Their lotus feet."

Śabarī then worshipped the Lord and placed fruits before Him. Praising her devotion in highest terms, the Lord accepted her worship and conferred the highest blessing on her by partaking of the fruits lovingly offered by her. The poet Tulasīdās depicts in glowing terms how much the Lord relished those fruits. He says:—

"Wherever the Lord was ever entertained, whether at His own home, at the preceptor's residence, at a friend's house or even at His father-in-law's, nowhere and at no time did He enjoy the dishes so well, nor did He find them as delicious as the fruits of Śabarī. This is what He explicitly acknowledged on every such occasion."*

* The story of Śabarī has been adapted from the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Gosvāmī Tulasīdās and other similar works.

RANTIDEVA

King Rantideva was the son of King Saṅkṛti. A powerful ruler, Rantideva was extremely compassionate by nature. Observing the woes and sufferings of the poor, he gave away all he possessed in charity. Having been thus reduced to straits, he could maintain himself and his family with great difficulty. Even in that state he gave away to the poor whatever he got, and remained without food himself. Reduced to utter destitution, the king thus led a life of extreme misery with all the members of his family.

On a certain occasion the king had to go without food and water for full forty-eight days. Oppressed by hunger and thirst, his limbs began to tremble. On the morning of the forty-ninth day he got some ghee, rice boiled in milk, porridge and water. Forty-eight days, complete fast had rendered the king and his family extremely weak. The limbs of all were shaking.

When Rantideva was about to partake of this food, a Brāhmaṇa who was quite unknown to him appeared on the scene. Out of a crore it is very easy to give away a lakh of rupees in charity for name's sake; but it is most difficult for a starving person to part with his food. The great devotee Rantideva, however, who saw God present everywhere, gave away a share of his food to the Brahmaṇa with due respect and reverence. Satisfied with the king's hospitality, the Brāhmaṇa went away.

After entertaining the Brāhmaṇa, the king was about to share the remaining food with his family, when another stranger belonging to the Śūdra class made his appearance. With the thought of Śrī Hari foremost in his mind, the king gave away a part of this food to that destitute. Meanwhile a third stranger appeared with a number of dogs and begged food for himself and his dogs on the plea of hunger.

The devout king received this stranger also with due attention and, reverentially placing the whole of the remaining food at the disposal of the new comer and his dogs, bowed to him.

There was now left only a small quantity of water barely enough to appease the thirst of a single individual. The king was about to quaff it, when an outcast appeared before him and made the following submission in a pathetic tone, "O great king ! I am extremely tired and exhausted. Low and impure as I am, please favour me with a little water to drink."

Hearing this piteous appeal of the pariah, and knowing him to be really exhausted, the king was moved with great compassion, and he uttered the following nectar-like words:—

"I crave not from God the highest form of destiny with the eight superhuman faculties, nor freedom from rebirth. My only prayer is that dwelling in the heart of all beings I may undergo their suffering, so that they may be rid of all sorrow.

"[This man is dying of thirst, and he is piteously seeking water from me in order to save his life.] By offering this life-giving drink to this humble creature who is anxious to live, my hunger, thirst, exhaustion, bodily suffering, lowness of spirit, languor, grief, depression and infatuation, all have disappeared."*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata IX.xxi.12-13).

With these words on his lips the tender-hearted king Rantideva, though half-dead himself due to thirst, reverentially and cheerfully gave the whole of that water to the pariah.

The aforesaid strangers were no other than the three lords of creation, Brahmā,

---

* न कामयेऽहं गतिमीश्वरात्परामष्टर्द्धियुक्तामपुनर्भवं वा । आर्त्तिं प्रपद्येऽखिलदेहभाजामन्तःस्थितो येन भवन्त्यदुःखाः ॥
क्षुत्तृट्श्रमो गात्रपरिश्रमश्च दैन्यं क्लमः शोकविषादमोहाः । सर्वे निवृत्ताः कृपणस्य जन्तोर्जिजीविषोर्जीवजलार्पणान्मे ॥

Viṣṇu and Śiva, who confer boons of various kinds on those who seek them, and who appeared through their delusive potency in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa and others in order to test the piety of the great king Rantideva. They were supremely delighted to observe the power of endurance and depth of devotion exhibited by the king, and appeared before him in their actual form. Obtaining thus a direct vision of the three Lords all at once, the king bowed before them, but did not ask for any boon, even though called upon to do so.

For, renouncing all forms of worldly attachment and desires, the king had fixed his mind exclusively on God. In this way Rantideva, who was exclusively devoted to God, completely merged his thoughts in God and God alone; and he being thus identified with God, the veil of Māyā, consisting of the three Guṇas, lifted like a dream from before his eyes. Due to his association the other members of his family too wholly devoted themselves to Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, and attained the supreme state to which Yogīs alone are entitled.

The use of the compound adjective 'Bhaktyupahṛtam' is intended to convey that the Lord refuses to accept things that are offered to Him with a cold heart. Where there is love, and the devotee feels genuine delight both in offering a thing to God and in its acceptance by the Lord, He not only accepts such an offering, but may even force His way into the house of such a devotee and eat things from his store, as He did in the case of the blessed Gopīs of Vraja. For in reality God hungers and thirsts for love, and not for things of the world.

By the words 'Aham' and 'Aśnāmi' the Lord indicates that appearing in person before such a devotee He eats the articles offered by him with a pure and loving heart. That is to say, when He is present in the world in a human or other garb, He goes to the devotee in person, while at other times He manifests Himself before the devotee in the form desired by the devotee, and fulfils the object of his existence by eating whatever is offered to him.

This naturally raises the question in Arjuna's mind as to what he should do under the circumstances. Anticipating this question the Lord lays down the duty for Arjuna:—

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत्।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम्॥ २७॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; यत् whatever; करोषि you do; यत् whatever; अश्नासि you eat; यत् whatever; जुहोषि you offer as oblation to the sacred fire; यत् whatever; ददासि you bestow (as a gift); यत् whatever; तपस्यसि you do by way of penance; तत् (all) that; मदर्पणम् कुरुष्व offer to Me.

Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever you do by way of penance, offer it all to Me. (27)

By using the five verbs 'Karoṣi', 'Aśnāsi', 'Juhoṣi', 'Dadāsi' and 'Tapasyasi' with the pronoun 'Yat' joined to each, the Lord has enumerated in a nutshell all the duties of man. That is to say, the words 'Yat Karoṣi' cover all kinds of pursuits other than the performance of sacrifices, charity and austerity, viz., all activities carried on by man for earning his livelihood consistent with his grade in society and stage in life, social duties, and all other

duties enjoined by the scriptures, such as the practice of adoration, meditation etc. Even so all activities intended to keep the body and soul together, such as taking food and drink etc., are included in 'Yat Aśnāsi', and all practices connected with worship and the offering of oblations in fire etc., are comprised in 'Yat Juhoṣi'. Similarly all acts of charity and service are included in 'Yat Dadāsi', and all acts of selfrestraint and all forms of austere penance (XVII.14—17) are covered by 'Yat Tapasyasi'.

The common run of men identify themselves with, and feel attached to, such actions and crave for their fruit. Therefore, renouncing the feeling of identification with, and attachment for, all actions and the craving for their fruit, the devotee should realize that the whole universe belongs to God, that his own mind, intellect, body and senses also belong to God, and he himself belongs to God, so that whatever sacrificial and other acts are performed by him also belong to Him. Nay, he should further realize that like the showman making the puppet dance, it is God alone who is getting every thing done by him, and that it is God Himself who enjoys all those acts in various forms, he being a mere instrument and nothing else. And realizing this he should perform the aforesaid actions in a disinterested spirit as a behest from God and for His pleasure alone. This is what is meant by offering those actions to God.

Undertaking an action with another motive and subsequently offering it to God, offering an action to God even while performing it, offering the same to God as soon as it is completed, or offering its fruit to God—all these processes are included in the act of offering an action to God. In fact, these are the initial stages of offering one's actions to God. Total offering of actions to God as indicated in the foregoing paragraph is accomplished only by going through the above processes.

It may be asked here: What will be the result of offering all one's actions to God in the manner stated above ? Anticipating this query the Lord says:—

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः।
सन्न्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि॥ २८॥

एवम् thus; सन्न्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा with your mind established in the Yoga of Renunciation (offering of all actions to God); शुभाशुभफलैः कर्मबन्धनैः from the bonds of Karma in the shape of good and evil consequences; मोक्ष्यसे you will be freed; विमुक्तः (and) freed from them; माम् Me (alone); उपैष्यसि you will attain.

With your mind thus established in the Yoga of renunciation (offering of all actions to Me), you will be freed from the bonds of Karma in the shape of good and evil consequences; and freed from them, you will attain Me. (28)

The use of the indeclinable 'Evam' in this verse indicates that the word 'Saṁnyāsayoga' here does not stand for Sāṅkhyayoga, or Jñānayoga, but has been used in the sense of offering all action to God as enjoined in the preceding verse. 'Saṁnyāsayogayuktātmā', therefore, refers to him in whose mind and intellect the idea of offering all actions to God, as enjoined in the previous verse, has got deeply rooted.

Attaining heaven, or being condemned to hell, birth in the species of beasts, birds, human beings or other creatures, and going

through pleasurable or painful experiences as a result of one's noble or sinful deeds—these constitute the good and evil consequences referred to in this verse; and it is these consequences which are spoken of as the shackles of Karma. For it is the compulsory enjoyment of the fruit of actions that constitutes the binding effect of Karma. He who offers all his actions to God in the manner indicated in the preceding verse is exempted from their consequences in the form of rebirth and of pleasurable or painful experiences. This is what is meant by securing 'freedom from the bondage of Karma in the shape of good and evil consequences.' Attainment of the supreme abode of God after death, or coming face to face with God during one's life-time is what is meant by 'attaining God after being freed from the bondage of Karma'.

It is no doubt true that he who dedicates his activities to God naturally abstains from evil practices. But he must have perpetrated many evil deeds prior to his starting this practice, in his current life as well as in the numberless lives that have preceded it. Moreover, according to the principles laid down by the Lord in XVIII.48 that "all undertakings are tainted with some blemish, just as fire is clouded by smoke," one is liable to sins that are incidental to the performance of one's allotted duties. The devotee who offers all his actions to God is absolved of all such sins. This is what the Lord means when He speaks of such a devotee being exempted from both the good and evil consequences of actions.

When all good actions are offered to God in the manner indicated in the preceding verse, they result in God-realization alone. But acts of virtue done with an interested motive bring enjoyment as their fruit, both in this world and in the next. Actions which bring enjoyment in its wake throw one into the whirl-pool of transmigration and cause bondage through attachment and the craving for enjoyment. Therefore, it is but reasonable to speak of their fruit as causing bondage. But this should not lead one to conclude that all good actions are worth renouncing. They must be performed under every circumstance; but instead of expecting any return for them, one should go on dedicating them to God. When this is done, our actions, instead of causing bondage, will bring God-realization in their wake.

The statement that God is attained only by those who practise devotion to Him in the way mentioned above, and not by others, exposes Him to the charge of partiality. Therefore, while meeting this charge, the Lord says:—

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम्॥ २९॥

अहम् I; सर्वभूतेषु in all beings; समः (am) equally; न none; मे to Me; द्वेष्यः hateful; अस्ति there is; न nor; प्रियः dear; तु but; ये who; माम् Me; भक्त्या with love; भजन्ति worship; ते they; मयि (abide) in Me; च and; अहम् I; अपि too; तेषु (stand revealed) in them.

I am equally present in all beings; there is none hateful or dear to Me. They, however, who devoutly worship Me abide in Me; and I too stand revealed in them. (29)

God is equally present in all beings from Brahmā down to the smallest clump of grass as their inner witness. Therefore, He looks upon all with an equal eye, has

no partiality for or prejudice against anyone. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

Constantly dwelling with reverence and love on God with or without form, hearing, reflecting on and chanting the names, glory, virtues, greatness and stories of God, offering obeisance to Him, lovingly worshipping Him with leaves, flowers and other articles of one's choice and offering all one's actions to God—all these practices are included in the devout worship of God.

God seeks His devotees in the same way as they approach Him. Just as God does not slip out of the devotee's mind, even so the devotee does not pass out of His mind. This is what the Lord means when He says that such a devotee abides in God. And inasmuch as the stainless heart of such devotees brims over with divine love, God is ever directly visible in their heart. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by declaring Himself as present in them.

That is to say, although according to verse 4 of this chapter, God in His unmanifest aspect pervades all sentient and insentient beings and all beings, both sentient and insentient, ever dwell in Him, it is the devotee's love that makes it possible for the Lord to enshrine them in His heart as a special case, as also to stand revealed in their heart. It is therefore that the Lord says to Durvāsā:—

"The devotees are My own heart as it were, and I am the heart of the devotees. They know none but Me, and I know not in the least anyone but My devotees." *(Śrīmad Bhāgavata IX.iv.68).**

The sun, though shedding its light equally everywhere, casts its reflection only on transparent objects like the looking-glass, and not on opaque things like wood etc., and yet there is no partiality in it. Even so the fact that God is accessible only to His devotees and to none else betrays no partiality on His part. On the other hand, it reveals nothing but the glory of devotion.

While revealing His undifferentiating attitude towards those who worship Him, the Lord now declares in the next two verses that even the vilest sinner practising devotion to Him attains lasting peace, and thus brings out the special glory of devotion.

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक्।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः॥ ३०॥

चेत् if; सुदुराचारः the vilest sinner; अपि even; अनन्यभाक् devoted to none else; माम् Me; भजते worships; सः he; साधुः a saint; एव verily; मन्तव्यः should be accounted; हि because; सः he; सम्यग् व्यवसितः (has) rightly resolved.

Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion, he should be accounted a saint; for he has rightly resolved. (He is positive in his belief that there is nothing like devoted worship of God). (30)

The use of the indeclinable 'Api' in this verse is intended to emphasize His undifferentiating attitude towards His worshippers. That is to say, one should not wonder if men of righteous conduct and ordinary sinners should be redeemed by His worship; even the vilest sinner can be so redeemed.

The indeclinable 'Cet' has been used to indicate that men of sinful conduct do not as a rule take to His loving worship

* साधवो हृदयं मह्यं साधूनां हृदयं त्वहम्। मदन्यत्ते न जानन्ति नाहं तेभ्यो मनागपि॥

because of their attachment to worldly enjoyments and vice. Nevertheless, if through the revival of some past good tendency, or due to an atmosphere of God-consciousness, study of the scriptures or the holy association of saints, or by hearing the virtues, glory, greatness and mysteries of God a sinner develops faith in the devotion to God and takes to his adoration, he too secures redemption.

The word 'Sudurācāraḥ' stands for men whose conduct is most vile, who are addicted to prohibited food, drink and acts and who, being dominated by their evil nature, bad habits and attachment for enjoyment, cannot wholly give up their immoral practices. If by hearing or reading accounts of the divine virtues and glory etc., or due to some other cause such a sinner comes to look upon God as the supreme Reality, and depending exclusively on God recognizes Him with supreme faith and love as the sole object of his worship, he is said to be exclusively devoted to Him. And being thus devoted to God, he who dwells on His divine essence, hears, reflects on and chants His names, virtues, glory and greatness, offers obeisance to Him, worships Him with leaves, flowers and various other objects of his choice and offers his virtuous acts to Him is said to worship Him with exclusive devotion.

Such a devotee, even though desiring and striving to give up his immoral practices in toto may not be able to abandon any particular vice completely, being helplessly driven to it by his evil nature and vicious habit. Nevertheless, says the Lord he should be looked upon as a saint and not as a wicked person. For he has arrived at the definite conclusion that God is the redeemer of the fallen, a disinterested friend of all, almighty, supremely compassionate and omniscient, the universal Lord and the supreme Reality; that the highest duty of man is to worship Him; and that His adoration will not only eradicate all his sins and sinful proclivities but bring him face to face with God as a matter of course through His grace. There can be no higher or saner resolve than this in the eyes of God, and he who makes this resolve is acknowledged by the Lord as His devotee. Nay the Lord guarantees that his devotion will soon convert him into a Perfectly virtuous soul. Therefore, it is but reasonable that such a devotee should be accounted a virtuous soul rather than a sinner or an evil-minded person.

In verse 15 of Chapter VII the Lord stated that men of evil deeds do not worship Him; whereas in the present verse He states that the vilest sinner can worship Him, and thereby become a saint. Although the two statements appear as mutually contradictory, it will be found on closer examination that really speaking there is no contradiction between them. Thus it will be seen that the men of evil deeds referred to in the above verse of Chapter VII are not only addicted to sin, but they have neither faith in God nor any knowledge about Him, nor again are they keen to avoid the perpetration of sins. It is therefore that those foolish unbelievers have been characterized as 'men of deluded wisdom', 'vile among men', and 'men who have embraced the demoniac nature' etc. The sinner spoken of in the present verse, however, is one who though addicted to sin, is nonetheless anxious to avoid the perpetration of sins. He is devoted to God's virtues, glory, essence and names, and has arrived at the definite conclusion that God, who is the only redeemer of the fallen and is supremely compassionate, is the supreme Reality; that He is the supreme object of his worship, that His adoration is the highest duty of a human being, and that through His Grace all his sins will be eradicated, and he will easily attain Him. It

is therefore that he has been characterized as one who has 'rightly resolved', and who is devoted to none else than God. Adoration of God thus becomes quite natural to him. As for unbelievers, since they have no faith in God, it is hardly possible for them to take to the practice of adoration. Thus there is no contradiction whatsoever between the two statements of the Lord, both of which are correct in their own context.

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति॥ ३१॥

क्षिप्रम् speedily; भवति (he) becomes; धर्मात्मा virtuous; शश्वच्छान्तिम् lasting peace; निगच्छति (and) attains; कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; प्रतिजानीहि know (it) for certain; मे My; भक्तः devotee; न not; प्रणश्यति falls.

Speedily he becomes virtuous and secures lasting peace. Know it for certain, Arjuna, that My devotee never falls. (31)

The devotee referred to in the preceding verse is not only freed in his very lifetime and without delay from all vices and immoral practices, but acquires the divine virtues mentioned in verses 1 and 3 of Chapter XVI, and thus becomes eligible for God-realization. And 'lasting peace' here means peace which, once attained, is never lost, viz., peace in the shape of God-realization, referred to as 'Naiṣṭhikī Śānti' in V.12, 'everlasting peace, consisting of supreme bliss' in VI.15 and as 'supreme peace' in XVIII.62.

The verb 'Pratijānīhi' is derived from the root 'Jñā' (to know) with 'Prati' prefixed to it. It, therefore, means 'know it for certain' or 'vouch for it.' By using this word the Lord asks Arjuna to believe whatever He says in praise of devotees as well as of devotion as undoubtedly true, and have it indelibly impressed on his mind.

The verb 'Naśyati' with 'Pra' prefixed to it means 'undergoes a fall'. What the Lord intends to convey by the use of this word is that a devotee of God gradually rises in the scale of spiritual evolution and never suffers a fall. In other words, he neither experiences a spiritual set-back nor meets with an evil destiny in the shape of birth in a sub-human species or tortures in hell. Gradually freed from vice and evil conduct, he soon becomes a virtuous soul and attains supreme peace.

BHAKTA BILVAMAṄGALA

As an instance in point, we may cite the example of Bilvamaṅgala, author of the devotional poem "Śrī Kṛṣṇakarnāmṛta", who appeared only a few centuries ago. Bilvamaṅgala was the son of a devout Brāhmaṇa, Rāmadāsa by name, who lived in a village on the bank of the Kṛṣṇavīṇā in south India. He was fairly educated, quiet in disposition, cultured and virtuous by nature; but having lost his father in early youth he fell in evil company and turned a moral rake. The house of a public woman was his favourite resort, and habitual indulgence in sins was his only occupation throughout the day. He had given his heart to a public woman, Cintāmaṇi by name. Cintāmaṇi lived on the other side of the river. Once it so happened that Bilvamaṅgala could not visit his paramour for a whole day. It was the death anniversary of his father. Although his physical body remained confined with in the four walls of his house, his mind revelled in

her company throughout the day. The sun had set by the time the Śrāddha ceremony was over. Bilvamaṅgala was now ready to depart. People tried to dissuade him on the ground that the day was sacred to the memory of his father; but he was adamant. Bilvamaṅgala hurriedly left his home and reached the bank of the river. A fearful storm with torrential rain overtook him there. The anxious boatmen moored their boats to the bank and took shelter under the trees. The night assumed a dismal aspect. Bilvamaṅgala pleaded hard with the boatmen to ferry him across the river, and offered them the temptation of a liberal fare; but nobody was willing to risk his life on any terms whatsoever. No risk, however, was too great for Bilvamaṅgala, who was bent upon visiting his sweetheart at all costs. Unmindful of consequences he jumped into the river. The corpse of a woman in an advanced stage of decomposition was drifting along the current. Due to the prevailing darkness, however, nothing could be easily distinguished. The eyes of Bilvamaṅgala, on the other hand, were blinded by passion. He mistook the corpse for a log of wood, and clutched at it. Nothing conscious of the corpse, or of its stench, he reached the other bank by sheer good luck, and ran to Cintāmaṇi's cottage. The door was closed. But no barrier was too much for his yearning heart. He made up his mind to enter the house by scaling the wall. Groping for something to help him he seized at what appeared to him a strong rope soft as silk, but which was actually a deadly cobra, hanging with its head and neck thrust into a hole in the wall. Bilvamaṅgala climbed the wall with the help of its tail. He was not, however, bitten by the snake. The Lord had so willed it. Entering the house he woke up Cintāmaṇi. She was, however taken, aback to see him at that odd hour. "How did you manage to cross the river during this fearful night, and enter the house ?" She asked, Bilvamaṅgala told her how he swam across the river with the help of a log of wood, and scaled the wall of the house with the help of a rope. It had now stopped raining. Cintāmaṇi came out with a light in her hand to ascertain the truth of his statement, and discovered to her consternation that the rope by which Bilvamaṅgala had scaled the wall was no other than a deadly cobra, and that the piece of log with the help of which he had crossed the river was a stinking corpse. Bilvamaṅgala also now saw what those things actually were and shuddered at their very sight. Cintāmaṇi now upbraided him saying "You, moral rake, you are a Brāhmaṇa by birth, and the day was sacred to the memory of your father; but due to your infatuation for this bundle of mere flesh and blood you abandoned all your virtues and sacred duties and came running all the way at this dreadful hour with the help of a corpse and a deadly snake ! But the figure which you are so passionately fond of and which you regard as exceptionally attractive today will be reduced to the same condition one day in which you find the corpse lying in front of you. Fie upon this lustful propensity of yours ! Had you been so enamoured of that swarthy beauty, the enchanter of all hearts, and sallied forth to meet Him with the same degree of restlessness, you would have surely attained the object of your existence by realizing Him."

The admonition of the harlot worked like a miracle. The chords of Bilvamaṅgala's heart now responded to a new melody. The fire of wisdom blazed forth in his heart and reduced all his impurities to ashes. As soon as his heart got purged, the flood-gate of divine love was flung open, and tears began to flow in an unending stream through his eyes. Clasping Cintāmaṇi's feet Bilvamaṅgala

said, "Mother, by opening my inward eye you have really blessed me. Mentally accepting her as his spiritual guide he bowed low at her feet. The rest of the night was spent by Cintāmaṇi singing to him the sports of love of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which made a deep impression on Bilvamaṅgala's mind. As soon as the day broke, he left Cintāmaṇi's house as a maniac completely absorbed in the sacred thought of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the real Cintāmaṇi (the wish-yielding gem) for the whole world. The first act in the drāmā of Bilvamaṅgala's life thus came to a close.

Approaching saint Somagiri, who lived on the bank of the river Kṛṣṇavīṇā, Bilvamaṅgala obtained initiation into the sovereign Mantra sacred to Śrī Gopāla (the Divine Cowherd) and started the practice of adoration in right earnest. Chanting the names of God he began to move about in the countryside. A longing for the direct perception of God was roused in his mind; but his immoral propensities had not yet wholly disappeared. Compelled by evil habit his mind once more felt enamoured of a young lady. Following her footsteps, Bilvamaṅgala halted at the door of her house. The owner of the house was surprised to see a Brāhmaṇa waiting at the threshold with a dismal look on his countenance. Questioned by him Bilvamaṅgala revealed his mind to him with a guileless heart and said, "I long to see the girl but once to my heart's content. Please send her to me here." The young lady was none other than the wife of the wealthy merchant whom with Bilvamaṅgala was holding this conversation. The good merchant saw nothing inherently wrong in this request and was anxious to accommodate the Brāhmaṇa as for as he could. He, therefore, entered the house to call his wife. Meantime Bilvamaṅgala's mind turned into a turbulent ocean, in which thought-waves of various kinds were furiously raging.

Bilvamaṅgala had already turned a devotee of God; how could there be any fall for him ? His vision had been clouded by ignorance. The Lord, who is extremely fond of the poor and miserable, opened his eye of wisdom. Bilvamaṅgala woke to the wretched condition of his mind; his heart was filled with remorse and he plucked two big thorns from an adjoining wood-apple tree with what intention nobody knew. Meantime, the wife of the wealthy merchant made her appearance there. Looking at her intently for some time, Bilvamaṅgala mentally reproached his eyes and said, "O detestable eyes ! but for you I would not have been reduced to this wretched condition." Mentally uttering these words Bilvamaṅgala, in a fit of momentary weakness or whatever it may be, thought it best at that moment to punish his wayward eyes and instantly thrust the pair of thorns into them ! Streams of blood began to flow from his eyes. Laughing and dancing, Bilvamaṅgala rent the air with the chanting of the Divine Names. The merchant and his wife were distressed at this sad turn, but they were quite helpless in the matter. Remnants of impurity lying hidden in the inmost recesses of Bilvamaṅgala's heart got washed away, and he was extremely impatient now to meet the "Protector of the forlorn" as speedily as possible.

The terrible pangs of separation from his most beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa turned the blinded eyes of Bilvamaṅgala into a perennial fount of tears. Having no feeling of hunger and thrist, he had lost all distinction of sleep and wakefulness as well. Rending the air with the shouts of 'Kṛṣṇa', Bilvamaṅgala roamed from forest to forest and from village to village. That the 'Friend of the poor', for whom he had deliberately put out his eyes, and the Beloved for whose sake he had

spurned a life of luxury and ease should be so tardy to appear was too much for a lover who was pining to meet Him, How could Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is all love, remain nonchalant under such circumstances ? Appearing in the guise of a small cowherd boy the Lord approached Bilvamaṅgala, and spoke to him in accents the melody of which enchanted even the mind of sages. "O blind singer," He said, "you must be feeling awfully hungry. Here is a sweet dish and a glass of water. Please accept them." Enthralled by the very melody of His voice Bilvamaṅgala's heart leapt with joy as he partook of that rare dish touched by His blessed hands. "Tell me, dear !" he enquired of the boy, "where do you live ? What is your name, and what is your occupation ?"

"My dwelling is near at hand", replied the boy. "I bear no particular name; but I respond to any name by which I may be called. My work is to tend the cows. Whosoever loves me, gets my love in return." Bilvamaṅgala felt enraptured by the music of the child's voice, which surpassed even the melody of the flute. The boy, while parting company with Bilvamaṅgala, assured the latter that he would provide him with food everyday. Bilvamaṅgala gladly accepted this gratuitous offer and requested the boy to see him everyday. The boy disappeared and took with him the heart of Bilvamaṅgala too. True to his word, he visited Bilvamaṅgala everyday with a dish of dainty food.

Bilvamaṅgala had not the least suspicion that the boy was none else than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for whose sake he had accepted a mendicant's role, and put out his eyes with thorns. But the boy had cast such a spell on his mind that he could brook no talk other than that of the boy. He said to himself one day, "I came here leaving behind all objects of worldly attachment, but a new source of attachment awaited me. Freed from the allurement of woman I have fallen a prey to the charm of this boy." While this thought was agitating Bilvamaṅgala's mind, the sportive boy quietly came near him and said in a maddening voice, "O venerable Sir, what are you thinking about? Have you a mind to visit Vṛndāvana ?" Bilvamaṅgala's soul rejoiced at the very mention of Vṛndāvana; but pointing out his helplessness due to lack of vision he said, "O friend, how can a blind man like me aspire to visit Vṛndāvana ?" "Take hold of this end of my stick," the boy replied, "I shall take you to Vṛndāvana." A thrill of joy passed through Bilvamaṅgala when he heard this. Holding the other end of the stick the Lord Himself acted as Bilvamaṅgala's guide and led him to Vṛndāvana. Praise be to this tender-heartedness of the Lord ! He personally guides the devotee, and shows him the path ! Not long afterwards the boy said, "Here you are in Vṛndāvana. I am off now." Bilvamaṅgala caught hold of the boy by the arm. At the very touch of his person Bilvamaṅgala felt as if a current of electricity had passed through his body; all the faculties of his senses were illumined by a flood of Sāttvika light. Blessed with the divine vision he discovered that the boy was none other than his beloved Lord. A shiver ran through his body and tears of joy streamed forth from his eyes. He caught the arm of the blessed Lord all the tighter and said, "Lord ! I have now recognized you. I have caught hold of you after a long time. You cannot elude me now." The Lord tried to disengage His arm from the blind man's grip; but Bilvamaṅgala would not let Him go.

With a sudden jerk the Lord freed His arm from the grasp of Bilvamaṅgala. How could poor, blind Bilvamaṅgala withstand Him with the help of whose strength Māyā kept the entire creation prostrate at

her feet ? But Bilvamaṅgala had tied the Lord with a knot which even He could not easily undo. Baffled by the Lord, Bilvamaṅgala said, "Are You really leaving me ? But remember this:—

"Kṛṣṇa, it is no wonder that You are leaving me, freeing Your arm by force. But I shall acknowledge Your manliness only when You manage to slip out of my heart."*

Starting his career as a libertine, Bilvamaṅgala turned a devotee, who was saved when faced with an imminent fall, and finally succeeded in attaining the object of his life by realizing God. The sweet and inspiring poems he composed in an ecstatic mood during his journey to Vṛndāvana are collected in the form of the "Kṛṣṇakarṇāmṛta". In the very opening verse of that beautiful collection, proclaiming Cintāmaṇi as his guide and preceptor, he offers obeisance to her in the following words:—

"All glory to Cintāmaṇi, the dispeller of my ignorance, to Somagiri, my preceptor, and last, but not the least, to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, my Teacher, who wears on His head a crown adorned with the peacock-feather, and whose feet, that serve as the wish-yielding tree, are courted by the goddess of victory."†

Like the great sage Śrī Śukadeva, Bilvamaṅgala also enjoyed the nectar of the sweet sports of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa; it is therefore that he has been aptly given the nickname of 'Līlāśuka'.

Showing thus lack of discrimination in Him on the basis of moral and immoral conduct, the Lord now proceeds to reveal in the text two verses that He makes no distinction between high and low birth, and glorifying devotion in the form of self-surrender to God, commands Arjuna to take to the practice of adoration.

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम्॥ ३२॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; स्त्रियः women; वैश्याः members of the trading and agriculturalist classes; शूद्राः those belonging to the labouring and artisan classes; तथा as well as; पापयोनयः those of vile birth; ये अपि whoever; स्युः (they) may be; ते they; अपि too; माम् Me; व्यपाश्रित्य taking refuge in; पराम् गतिम् the supreme goal; हि verily; यान्ति reach.

Arjuna, women, Vaiśyas (members of the trading and agriculturist classes) Śūdras (those belonging to the labouring and artisan classes), as well as those of vile birth (such as the pariah), whoever they may be, taking refuge in Me they too attain the supreme goal. (32)

People who are born as a result of past sins among low classes such as the pariah are referred to here as 'Pāpayonayaḥ' (those of vile birth). Besides these, members of such non-Āryan or Barbarian races such as the Hūṇas, the Bhīlas the Khasis, the Ionians and so on are also recognized by the Śāstras as falling under the category of 'Pāpayonayaḥ'. The word 'Pāpayonayaḥ' in this verse stands for all of them. Birth in a low caste or community constitutes no barrier to the practice of devotion of God.

---

* हस्तमुत्क्षिप्य यातोऽसि बलात् कृष्ण किमद्भुतम्। हृदयाद्यदि निर्यासि पौरुषं गणयामि ते॥

† चिन्तामणिर्जयति सोमगिरिर्गुरुमे शिक्षागुरुश्च भगवाञ्छिखिपिच्छमौलिः।
यत्पादकल्पतरुपल्लवशेखरेषु लीलास्वयंवररसं लभते जयश्रीः॥

Unadulterated love is the only qualification required for this practice.* Among these classes have appeared in ancient and modern times many great devotees who realized God by dint of their unsullied devotion. The names of Guha, who belonged to the class known as the Niṣādas, and others are the best known among them.

GUHA, THE CHIEF OF THE NIṢĀDAS

Guha, who belonged to the class known as the Niṣādas, ruled over Śṛṅgaverapura. He was a great devotee of God. While on His way to the forest Bhagavān Śrī, Rāma together with Śrī Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa; accepted the hospitality of Guha. The Lord recognized him as a friend; it was therefore that he was embraced and clasped to the bosom by Bharata when the latter met him later. Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa says in his *Rāmacaritamānasa:*—

"When he saw him (Guha) lying prostrate before him, Bharata took him up by the hand clasped him to his bosom. He felt at that moment as if his own brother Lakṣmaṇa was there, and his heart overflowed with love."

The adjective 'Pāpayonayaḥ' in this verse cannot be taken to be a qualification of women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras. The Vaiśyas rank among the 'twice-born' classes. The Śāstras recognize their full right to study the Vedas and perform sacrifices and other Vedic rites. Therefore, falling as they do under the category of the twice-born classes, they could not have been referred to as of vile birth. Besides, while discussing the destiny of Jīvas varying according to the quality of their past Karma, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* distinctly says:—

"Among them, those who perform meritorious deeds in this world soon attain superior birth, *i.e.,* are born among the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriyas or the Vaiśyas. Whereas those who perform evil deeds in this world attain vile birth, *i.e.,* are born as dogs, swine or outcasts."† (V.x.7)

This conclusively proves that the Vaiśyas cannot be counted among those of vile birth. As for women, those belonging to the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya classes are recognized as entitled to perform sacrifices and other Vedic rituals alongwith their husbands. Hence they too do not come under the category of 'Pāpayonayaḥ'. The greatest objection to this interpretation lies in the fact that it precludes the possibility of the pariah and others attaining the highest goal through devotion, which is admitted by all the Śāstras and which marks the crowning

---

* नास्ति तेषु जातिविद्यारूपकुलधनक्रियादिभेदः।

(Nārada: *Aphorisms on Bhakti* 72)

"Birth, scholarship, external appearance, pedigree, wealth and occupation etc., make no difference in devotees."

आनिन्द्ययोन्यधिक्रियते पारम्पर्यात् सामान्यवत्।

(Śāṇḍilya: *Aphorisms on Bhakti* 78)

"Tradition upholds the title of all men including those of vile birth to the practice of Devotion, even as to the practice of common virtues such as non-violence etc."

भक्त्याहमेकया ग्राह्यः श्रद्धयाऽऽत्मा प्रियः सताम्। भक्तिः पुनाति मन्निष्ठा श्वपाकानपि सम्भवात्॥

(*Bhāgavata* XI.xiv.21)

"O Uddhava ! I, the beloved 'self' of the holy ones, can be captivated only through devotion. Devotion to Me sanctifies even outcaste by birth."

† तद्य इह रमणीयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते रमणीयां योनिमापद्येरन् ब्राह्मणयोनिं वा क्षत्रिययोनिं वा वैश्ययोनिं वाथ य इह कपूयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते कपूयां योनिमापद्येरञ्श्वयोनिं वा सूकरयोनिं वा चाण्डालयोनिं वा।

glory of devotion.* Therefore, instead of treating 'Pāpayonayaḥ' as a qualification of women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras it would be much more reasonable to interpret the word as referring to men lower in birth even than the Śūdras.

Women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras too have claimed a number of devotees. As instances in point, short accounts are given below of the celebrated Yajñapatnīs, Samādhi, and Sañjaya.

YAJÑAPATNĪS

A few Brāhmaṇas were engaged in performing a sacrifice at Vṛndāvana. With the concurrence of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa His cowherd playmates approached the Brāhmaṇas and asked them for food. The sacrificing Brāhmaṇas drove them away with a rebuke. The boys thereupon approached the wives of the Brāhmaṇas. The very name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa drove them into raptures and they went to Śrī Kṛṣṇa carrying articles of food with them. One of the Brāhmaṇas prevented his wife from going and forcibly locked her up. Her love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa swelled to such an extent that meditating on the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as conceived by her through hearsay she cast off her physical encasement and joined the Lord before all the rest (*Bhāgavata* X.23).

SAMĀDHI

Samādhi was the son of a wealthy merchant, Drumiṇa by name. Covetous of his wealth, his wife and children conspired against him and drove him out of home. Retiring to the forest he met there a certain king, called Suratha, He too had repaired to the forest, having suffered at the hands of his faithless ministers, generals and his own kith and kin. So both were sailing in the same boat. Ultimately they both sought refuge with the Divine Mother, who is all truth, all knowledge and all bliss, and shaking off all attachment to worldly enjoyments they betook themselves to the worship of the Goddess. On their completing three years of worship the Goddess appeared before them and asked them to seek some boon from Her. The craving for worldly enjoyment still lurked in King Suratha's mind; he, therefore, asked for objects of enjoyment. The mind of Samādhi, however, was full of dispassion. He had realized the momentary and sorrowful nature of the world; therefore, he sought the knowledge of the divine truth. By grace of the Goddess his ignorance was dispelled, and he attained the true Knowledge of God. (*Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa* 81—93; *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa* 62-63)

---

† किरातहूणान्ध्रपुलिन्दपुल्कसा आभीरकङ्का यवनाः खसादयः।
येऽन्ये च पापा यदुपाश्रयाश्रयाः शुद्ध्यन्ति तस्मै प्रभविष्णवे नमः॥

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* II.iv.18)

"Obeisance to Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the Lord of the universe, taking shelter under whose devotees members of the low-born classes such as the Kirātas, the Hūṇas, the Āndhras, the Pulindas, the Pukkasas, the Ābhīras, the Kaṅkas, the Yavanas and the Khasas and even others who are steeped in sin become pure."

व्याधस्याचरणं ध्रुवस्य च वयो विद्या गजेन्द्रस्य का का जातिर्विदुरस्य यादवपतेरुग्रस्य किं पौरुषम्।
कुब्जायाः कमनीयरूपमधिकं किं तत्सुदाम्नो धनं भक्त्या तुष्यति केवलं न च गुणैर्भक्तिप्रियो माधवः॥

"What righteous conduct did the hunter possess ? Was Dhruva advanced in age ? What erudition did the lord of elephant possess ? Did Vidura claim any high descent ? What was the prowess exhibited by Ugrasena, the Yādava king ? Did Kubjā (the hump-backed maid-servant of Kaṁsa) have an attractive appearance ? What wealth did Sudāmā claim ? The Lord is pleased only by devotion, and not by merits; for He is fond of devotion alone."

SAÑJAYA

Sañjaya was the son of a charioteer, Gāvalguṇa by name. He was exceptionally quiet and polite by nature, and possessed the knowledge of both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God. Nay, he was devoted to righteous conduct, fearless, truthful, self-controlled, pious and outspoken, was a great devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and possessed knowledge of the reality about Him. He had intimacy with Arjuna from their early boyhood, hence he had the freedom to enter the inner apartments of Arjuna whenever he liked. When he called on the Pāṇḍavas to negotiate on behalf of the Kauravas, Arjuna was resting in the gynaeceum. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Draupadī and Satyabhāmā (Śrī Kṛṣṇa's favourite consort) were also there. Returning to the Kaurava Court, Sañjaya gave a beautiful and lucid account of his meeting with them. *(Mahā., Udyoga.,* LIX.)

During the Mahābhārata war the sage Vedavyāsa gifted him with supersensuous vision, with the help of which he succeeded in reporting to King Dhṛatrāṣṭra all incidents connected with the war.

The reality about Śrī Kṛṣṇa was known only to a few exalted souls like Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, Sañjaya, Vidura and Bhīṣma. Addressed by Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Sañjaya once said, "I do not follow the promptings of Avidyā (Nescience) under the spell of attachment to wife and children, nor do I practise any virtue without offering the same to God. I have come to know the reality about Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the object of universal prayer, only through purity of heart and the practice of Bhaktiyoga." Discussing the reality and prowess of the Lord, Sañjaya further said, "The Discuss wielded by the noble-minded Śrī Kṛṣṇa is five cubits in diameter, but it can assume any dimension according to His will. That circular weapon, radiating a flood of light, has come into being in order to fathom the relative strength of all. It is fatal to the Kauravas but most friendly to the Pāṇḍavas. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who possesses inordinate strength, killed as a mere sport terrible demons like Narakāsura, and Śaṁbarāsura, and proud tyrants like Kaṁsa and Śiśupāla. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is most handsome and supremely powerful, can subjugate the earth, heaven and the intermediate space by His mere thought..... If the entire universe ranges itself on one side and Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone on the other, He will be found to excel in substance. He can by His mere will reduce the world to ashes, but the whole world is incapable of harming Him in the least. Where there is truth, where there is virtue, where there is a sense of shame in sinning against God and where there is straightforwardness, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is there; and where Śrī Kṛṣṇa is, victory is bound to follow.* The supreme Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the soul of the entire creation, rules and guides the earth, heaven and the intermediate region as a mere sport; as if deluding all these people and using the Pāṇḍavas as His tools He seeks to extirpate your unrighteous and foolish sons. By His own power Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa constantly revolves the wheel of time, the wheel of creation and the wheel of successive ages. I utter the bare truth when I say that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the sole Lord of Time, Death and the entire universe, consisting of sentient and insentient creation. Just as the farmer gathers his corn when the crop is ready, so does Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme Lord of Yoga, even though sustaining the universe, undertakes to destory it too. He deludes all by His great delusive power; but those who take refuge in Him

* यतः सत्यं यतो धर्मो यतो ह्रीरार्जवं यतः। ततो भवति गोविन्दो यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः॥

(Mahā., Udyoga., 68—9)

never get deluded.*

Thereafter, Sañjaya gave out to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra the various names of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and their beautiful meanings. Sañjaya too tried his very best to prevent the Mahābhārata war, but in vain. When Dhṛtarāṣṭra proceeded to the forest, Sañjaya also accompanied his master.

By using the word, 'Api' twice in this verse the Lord shows absolute lack of discrimination in Him on the score of high and low birth. The intention of this statement of the Lord seems to be that it is altogether immaterial to Him whether His devotee is a women, a Vaiśya or a Śūdra *i.e.,* of lower rank when compared to a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya, or even a pariah, who is regarded as still lower. Whoever worships Him, taking refuge in Him, attains the supreme state.

Taking refuge in the Lord here means surrendering oneself to Him with absolute faith according to the spirit of verse 34 below. This consists in remaining ever, contented under every circumstance, taking it to be a dispensation of God; constantly hearing, chanting and reflecting on the names, form, virtues and stories of the Lord, recognizing Him alone as the goal, supporter and Lord; worshipping Him with faith and devotion, bowing to Him, carrying out His behests, and offering all actions to Him.

Attainment of the supreme Goal by such devotees means direct communion with God. The intention is to show that men and women of any caste whatsoever who surrender themselves to God in the manner stated above attain direct communion with Him.

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा।
अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम्॥ ३३॥

पुनः then; किम् how much more; पुण्याः holy; ब्राह्मणाः Brāhmaṇas; तथा and; भक्ताः devout; राजर्षयः royal sages; असुखम् joyless (and); अनित्यम् transient; इमम् this; लोकम् human life; प्राप्य having obtained; माम् Me; भजस्व (constantly) worship.

How much more, then, holy Brāhmaṇas and royal sages devoted to Me ! Therefore, having obtained this joyless and transient human life, constantly worship Me. **(33)**

By using the words 'Kim' and 'Punaḥ', the Lord intends to convey that when even the vilest sinner (IX.30) and members of the low-born classes such as the pariah (IX.32) succeed in attaining the supreme state through the practice of adoration, there should be no wonder that devotees who rank high both in lineage and moral character and conduct, viz., pious Brāhmaṇas and royal sages, should do so by taking refuge in Him.

The word 'Puṇyāḥ', stands for those who are pious by nature and virtuous in conduct. This adjective is intended to qualify the Brāhmaṇas alone; for the word 'Rājarṣayaḥ' applies only to those members of the royal class who are spotless in character and noble in conduct like the Ṛṣis (sages). Hence the use of the qualification 'Puṇyāḥ' would be redundant in their case.

The word 'Bhaktāḥ, however, should be connected with Brāhmaṇas and royal sages both; for it is Bhakti which has been spoken of here as responsible for attaining the supreme goal.

---

* ये तमेव प्रपद्यन्ते न ते मुह्यन्ति मानवाः। (*Mahā., Udyoga.,* 68-69)

Countless devotees have appeared among the Brāhmaṇas and the royal sages. It is just to give a faint indication of their greatness that a reference is made below to Maharṣi Sutīkṣṇa and the royal sage Ambarīṣa.

SUTĪKṢṆA

Maharṣi Sutīkṣṇa used to reside in the Daṇḍaka forest. He was a disciple of the great Agastya. An ascetic of no mean order possessing a remarkable spiritual glory, he was a great devotee as well. He had to his credit the deliverance of a Vaiśya, named Duṣpanya, who had turned into a devil due to his sins. (*Skanda., Brahma.*, 22) Sutīkṣṇa was exclusively devoted to Bhagavān Śrī Rāma. When he heard that accompanied by Śrī Sītā, who was no other than the Divine Mother, Śrī Rāma was coming to the Daṇḍaka forest, his joy knew no bounds. Indulging in pious dreams of various kinds he went forward to meet the Lord. In the ecstasy of love he lost all consciousness of his external surroundings. He forgot his own identity as well as his destination, and did not know in which direction he was proceeding and whether there was any track before him or not. Now he would turn round and then advance in the same direction again: and now he would begin to dance singing praises of the Lord ! Hiding Himself behind a tree the Lord of Raghus looked on the ecstatic mood of His devotee. Observing the intensity of the sage's love the Lord, who dispels the fear of transmigration, revealed Himself in Sutīkṣṇa's heart. Obtaining a vision of the Lord within his own heart, Sutīkṣṇa now sat motionless in the middle of the track. A thrill of joy ran through his whole body. The Lord of Raghus then approached him. Śrī Rāma was extremely delighted to see him in that rapturous mood.

The Lord of Raghus tried in many ways to awaken the sage from his trance; but the latter, who was enjoying the bliss of absorption in the Lord, would not wake up. When, however, the Lord withdrew His divine form from the sage's heart, he felt uneasy and got up. But as soon as he opened his eyes, he saw before him the trio of Śrī Sītā. Lakṣamaṇa and Śrī Rāma, the abode of bliss, who is easily distinguishable by His swarthy and beauteous form. The reward of his austerities stood revealed before him. His life became supremely blessed ! (*Śrī Rāmacaritamānasa, Araṇyakāṇḍa*).

AMBARĪṢA

Rājarṣi Ambarīṣa was the illustrious son of King Nābhāga, a grandson of Vaivasvata Manu (the progenitor of the present race of living beings). He was an emperor who ruled over the entire terrestrial region. But knowing as he did that all earthly glory is as unreal as the world seen in a dream, he had dedicated his whole life to God. His mind, together with all his senses, remained ever engaged in the service of God.

On one occasion the king with his queen took the vow of observing a fast on every Ekādaśī (eleventh lunar day of the dark and bright fortnights) for a whole year with a view to propitiating the Lord. On the day following the last Ekādaśī of the year worship was offered to the Lord with due ceremony. When the king was about to break his fast, the sage Durvāsā called on him with a batch of his pupils. Receiving the sage with all honour the king invited him to dinner. The sage accepted the royal invitation, and went to the bank of the Yamunā to perform his daily routine of midday worship. The twelfth lunar day was to expire only about half an hour later. A fast observed on an Ekādaśī day gets nullified if it is not broken in course of the twelfth. And it would be inhospitable on his part if

he broke his fast before feeding an honoured guest like Durvāsā. The king, therefore, sought the advice of learned Brāhmaṇas in this dilemma and with their concurrence formally broke his fast by sipping a little water out of that in which the feet of the Lord's image had been washed, and awaited the return of the sage to entertain him. After finishing his daily routine when sage Durvāsā returned to the king's palace, and came to know by supernatural power acquired through religious austerities that the king had broken his fast during his absence, he lost his temper, and with an angry look spoke as follows to the pious king, who stood before him with joined palms as a culprit: "Look at the impertinent and sacrilegious behaviour of this vile king, who is intoxicated with the pride of wealth ! He is no longer a devotee of Viṣṇu. He has begun to look upon himself as the Deity. Having invited me as a guest he has broken his fast before feeding me. Let him taste the fruit of this impertinence !" With these words the irascible sage plucked a lock of matted hair from his head and threw it on the ground with great violence, when immediately, like a deadly fire, a terrible demoness of the class known as 'Kṛtyā' manifested herself, and rushed at the king, sword in hand, shaking the earth by her heavy treads. Ambarīṣa, however, who had unwavering faith in God, stood undaunted where he was, without receding a step. He who sees God everywhere can have no cause for fear; why should he be afraid of anyone ?

The demoness had hardly reached Ambarīṣa when the Lord's discus known as Sudarśana instantaneously reduced her to ashes, even as terrible forest fire burns down a hissing serpent. The discus now pursued the sage in order to wreak vengeance on him. Unnerved by this unforeseen turn of events the sage ran for life; but the discus still doggedly pursued him. Durvāsā wandered in all directions and traversed all the fourteen regions of the universe, but he found shelter nowhere. No one afforded him or even promised him help. As a last resort he went to Vaikuṇṭha (the eternal abode of Bhagavān Viṣṇu), and falling at the feet of the Deity he cried out in distress, "Lord ! Ignorant of Your glory I have insulted Your devotee. Kindly exonerate me from this fault. By merely chanting Your name even the denizens of hell are rid of the tortures. Therefore, pray forgive this fault of mine."

The Lord replied as follows:—

"O Brāhmaṇa ! I am completely under the domination of My devotee. I am not free. The devotee is extremely dear to Me and rules over My heart. I hold My own Self, and even My own Consort, Goddess Lakṣmī, is of no account when compared to the virtuous soul who is extremely devoted to Me, and who looks upon Me as his supreme goal. How can I forsake the devotee who having renounced his wife, progeny, home, family, wealth, life, and the entire prospects of this world and the next for My sake solely depends on Me ? Just as a devoted and faithful wife wins over her virtuous Lord by dint of her unadulterated love, even so the devotee who has his mind fixed on Me and looks upon all with the same eye wins Me over by his unalloyed devotion. To say nothing of perishable worlds like heaven etc., he would not accept even the four types of final beatitude (residence in the abode of God, close proximity to the Deity, acquiring a form similar to the form of the Deity and fusion with the Deity) to which he gets entitled by virtue of his devotion. He regards everything as valueless when compared to Divine Love."

Finally the Lord said, "Brāhmaṇa, if you seek deliverance from this calamity,

you should approach the blessed King Ambarīṣa himself, and crave his pardon. Then alone you will attain peace and happiness." Thus commanded by the Lord, Durvāsā turned back towards the terrestrial region.

The great devotee Ambarīṣa, on this side, was passing through a peculiar state of mind. Ever since the Discus started in pursuit of Durvāsā, the royal sage had been pining out of sympathy for the latter. The Brāhmaṇa had gone away without taking food, and the thought that it was due to him that the Brāhmaṇa had to run so hard for fear of death pricked his conscience all the time. Under such circumstances, the king felt he had no right to take food himself. Reflecting thus Ambarīṣa gave up food from that very moment and lived on water alone. Durvāsā returned after a full year, but Ambarīṣa budged not an inch from his vow.

Durvāsā clutched the feet of the royal sage as soon as he returned to his palace. Ambarīṣa felt much abashed at this and humbly prayed to Sudarśana (the discus of Lord Viṣṇu) in the following words: "If I do not entertain in my heart the least amount of hatred for the sage, and if God, who is the Self of all living beings, is pleased with me, let yourself be appeased and deliver the sage from this calamity." The prayer appeased Sudarśana. Durvāsā, who was tormented with fear, was himself again and marks of joy and gratitude were clearly visible on his face. (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* IX.4-5)

* * *

Birth as a human being is exceptionally rare. It is obtained as result of great merit, and through special grace of God. It is vouchsafed only for God-realization. The life of that being alone is fruitful, who having obtained the human body strives for God-realization. On the other hand, he who seeks gratification of self through this remains deprived of the true blessings of human birth. For human life is wholly joyless; there is not the least trace of happiness anywhere in it. Contact with sense-enjoyments, which is regarded by man as a form of delight, is really painful in as much as it throws him, again and again, into the whirl-pool of births and deaths. Therefore, instead of regarding human life as delightful, man should realize as speedily as possible the object for attaining which this human existence has been vouchsafed to him. For frail as this human body is, no one knows which moment it may cease to function. Hence one should wake up to the gravity of the situation. Neither should a man fall into the snare of enjoyments taking human existence to be a source of delight, nor should he put off the practice of adoration, considering the human body as eternal. If this life gets frittered away due to his own negligence, nothing but fruitless repentance will be left open to him. The Śrutī says:—

"If God is realized in this very life, well and good. If, however, He is not realized in the course of this life, one will be a great loser."* (*Kena, Up.* II.5).

Therefore the Lord says that having obtained the human body one should constantly and exclusively devote oneself to the practice of adoration and should not forget Him even for a moment.

The word 'Mām' in this verse stands for the qualified aspect of God, and adoration consists in devoting oneself to God in the way indicated in the following verse, viz., dedicating one's mind, intellect, senses and body etc., to God and God alone. Speedy attainment of God is possible through the practice of Bhajana alone, and in God-realization alone lies the fulfilment

* इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः।

of the object of human existence. It is therefore that the Lord exhorts Arjuna in this verse to practise Bhajana or adoration of God.

Revealing the glory of Bhajana in the foregoing verses, Arjuna was eventually exhorted to practise the same. The Lord, therefore, now delineates the process of Bhajana, or self-surrender to God, and concludes the Chapter.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः॥ ३४॥

मन्मनाः भव fix your mind on Me; मद्भक्तः be devoted to Me; मद्याजी (भव) worship Me; माम् नमस्कुरु (and) make obeisance to Me; एवम् thus; आत्मानम् your self; युक्त्वा linking (with Me); मत्परायणः solely depending on Me; माम् to Me; एव alone; एष्यसि you shall come.

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and make obeisance to Me; thus linking your self with Me and entirely depending on Me, you shall come to Me. (34)

Knowing God as almighty and omniscient, the supreme Ruler of all the worlds, beyond all as well as all-formed, absolute as well as relative, formless as well as with form, the ocean of beauty, sweetness and power and the very embodiment of supreme Love, when the Sādhaka gets truly acquainted with the virtues, glory, truth and secret of God, and comes to the definite conclusion that God alone is the supreme object of his love, nothing in this world retains the least charm for him. In that state he entertains no attraction even for the rarest enjoyment of this world. When the Sādhaka reaches this stage, his mind naturally recoils from all objects of this world and the next, and he devotes himself with exclusive love and supreme reverence to constant remembrance of God and God alone. Such loving remembrance of God becomes the very prop of his life, and he cannot afford to forget Him even for a moment. The devotee who has attained this state is referred to here as 'Manmanāḥ' (he whose mind is absorbed in God).

A devotee of God is he who resigns Himself to the will of God, taking Him to be the supreme goal, the sole supporter and lord, nay, the supreme refuge and the best friend and protector; who is ever contented with every dispensation of God; who carries out his commands; who keeps his mind, intellect and senses absorbed in hearing, chanting and remembering His names, virtues, glory and stories etc., and does everything for the sake of His pleasure.

Visiting temples and offering proper worship to the sacred image of God, installing an image of one's beloved Deity in one's own home, if convenient, and offering worship to the same with due ceremony, faith and love; installing a mental image of the Deity in the cavity of one's own heart or in the open space just in front of the Sādhaka, and offering mental worship to the same, showing due reverence to His commandments, to the scenes of His sacred sports, and to His portraits etc.; keeping oneself engaged in activities connected with His service and worshipping Him through disinterested performance of sacrifices; looking upon one's parents and other elders and Brāhmaṇas in particular, and all living beings in general, as so many manifestations of God, or knowing God to be present in all as the inner witness, and offering them

due worship and honour, and sincerely trying to gratify and render good offices to them with mind, body and material resources: all these acts are included in what is known as the worship of God.

The word 'Mām' in this verse refers to that integral Divinity who is the creator, destroyer and controller of the whole universe, all-sustaining, all-powerful, all-pervading, all-knowing, the universal friend and well-wisher, the abode of all virtues, the supreme and best Person; who is both absolute and qualified as well as with form and without form; who sustains all as Viṣṇu, creates all as Brahmā, and destroys all as Rudra; who appears in our midst from age to age in various divine forms such as the Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and so on, and enacts wonderful sports in this world; and who manifests Himself in various forms as desired by His devotees, and takes them under His protection. And paying due homage in a devout and reverent spirit with one's mind, speech and body to the God with or without form, to an image or portrait of the Deity, to His blessed feet or marks thereof, to the scriptures expounding the truth, secret, love, glory and enchanting sports of the Lord, to saints and holy men who are the living images of God, nay, to all living beings of the universe, taking them as so many manifestations of God or considering God to be present in them as the inner witness—all this is included in offering obeisance to God.

The word 'Ātmānam' (self) in this verse stands for the body, including the mind, intellect and senses. And applying them all to God in the way indicated above is what is meant by linking the self with Him.

Complete dependence On God consists in thus offering everything to Him in the manner suggested above, and looking upon Him as the supreme object worth attaining, supreme goal, supreme refuge and one's all-in-all.

The word 'Eva' has been used for the sake of emphasis. The Lord thereby seeks to emphasize the fact that by striving on the lines suggested above Arjuna would undoubtedly attain Him. And obtaining a direct vision of God during one's very life-time, knowing Him in reality and entering His very being, or ascending to His divine abode, living in close proximity with Him, or obtaining a form similar to the Divine Form: all these are included in God-realization.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगो नाम
नवमोऽध्यायः॥ ९ ॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the ninth Chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Sovereign Science and the Sovereign Secret."

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter X

The chapter mainly deals with the special manifestations of God; hence it has been given the title of Vibhūtiyoga, or the Yoga of Divine manifestations.

Title of the Chapter

In the opening verse of this chapter the Lord undertakes to confide once more the supreme gospel and invites Arjuna to hear the same. In the second and third He describes His own glory under the name of 'Yoga' and indicates the fruit of its knowledge. Briefly enumerating His special manifestations in verses 4 to 6, He gives out the fruit of knowing them as well as His Yoga in the seventh. Detailing in the eighth and ninth the mode of worship practised by His wise devotees possessing exclusive love for Him, He describes the fruit of such worship in the tenth and eleventh. Thereafter, extolling the Lord in verses 12 to 15 Arjuna requests Him in verses 16 to 18 to describe in detail His special manifestations and power of Yoga once more. Pointing out the range of His divine manifestations as infinite and undertaking to name only the chief among them in the nineteenth, the Lord recounts them in verses 20 to 39. Reiterating the fact that the range of His divine manifestations in infinite, the Lord winds up this topic in the fortieth. And the chapter is concluded with a description of His Divine glory under the name of 'Yoga' in the forty-first and forty-second verses.

Summary of the Chapter

The exposition of Jñāna and Vijñāna (the Knowledge of Nirguṇa and Saguṇa Brahma) contained in chapters VII to IX having become too abstruse, the Lord introduces this chapter in order to expound the truth clearly once more in a different way. In the very opening verse of this chapter the Lord undertakes to discuss the same subject.

Link of the Discourse

श्रीभगवानुवाच

भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः।
यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया॥ १॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed (Arjuna); भूयः एव once again; मे My; परमम् supreme; वचः word; शृणु hear; यत् which; अहम् I; प्रीयमाणाय ते to you who are (so) loving; हितकाम्यया out of solicitude for (your) welfare; वक्ष्यामि shall speak.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, hear once again My supreme word, which I shall speak to you, who are so loving, out of solicitude for your welfare. (1)

The use of the words 'Bhūyaḥ' and 'Eva' (once again) in the beginning of the verse is intended to make it clear that the subject discussed in chapters VII to IX is being taken up once more, though in a different way.

The supreme word *(Paramam Vacaḥ)* is that which unravels the mystery of the most secret virtues, glory and truth of the supreme Person, God, and is conducive to His Realization. The words 'Paramam Vacaḥ' in this verse, therefore, refer to the Lord's teaching in the present Chapter, which is intended to unfold the secret of His virtues, glory and truth. By exhorting Arjuna to hear it once again, the Lord seeks to convey that the truth relating to Bhakti or devotion to Him is exceptionally difficult to understand; hence he should hear it with great attention, reverence and love, considering it most essential to hear it again and again.

By using the adjective 'Prīyamāṇāya' for Arjuna, the Lord says in effect, "Arjuna, the love you bear in your heart for Me is exceedingly great, and you listen to My words with utmost reverence and love, relishing them as nectar. It is therefore that without the least hesitation, and even unasked by you, I am repeatedly unravelling to you the mystery of My most secret virtues, glory and truth. All this is due to your love." And the use of the word 'Hitakāmyayā' indicates that Arjuna's love and devotion had filled the Lord's heart with solicitude for the latter's welfare. Therefore, whatever the Lord proposed to tell him was naturally an expression of His solicitude for his welfare.

Taking up the subject proposed to be discussed in this chapter, the Lord first gives in the following five verses a short description of His Yogic power and divine glory.

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः।
अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः॥ २॥

मे My; प्रभवम् birth (appearance in human or other garb out of mere sport); न neither; सुरगणाः gods; विदुः know; न nor; महर्षयः great sages; हि because; अहम् I; सर्वशः in all respects; देवानाम् of gods; च and; महर्षीणाम् of the great seers (as well); आदिः (am) the prime cause.

Neither gods nor the great sages know the secret of My birth (i.e., My appearance in human or other garb out of mere sport); for I am the prime cause in all respects of gods as well as of the great seers. (2)

God manifests Himself by His own incomparable Yogic power in the forms of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe respectively. He appears in our midst from time to time in different divine forms such as Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Divine Fish and the Divine Tortoise etc., for the destruction of the wicked and protection of His devotees, for establishing righteousness on a firm footing and for redeeming the creatures of the world by enacting wonderful sports of various kinds. Nay, He assumes various forms as desired by His devotees in order to bless them with His sight and further manifests Himself in the form of the Universe for releasing an infinite stream of multifarious sports. The word 'Prabhavam' refers to all these manifestations of God. On what particular occassions, in what particular forms, for what particular reasons and in what particular manner does God manifest Himself are divine secrets the reality of which is not known even to the gods and sages, who possess knowledge of pretersensual things, much less to ordinary men of the world. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

The word 'Suragaṇāḥ' stands for the various classes or types of gods recognized by the Śāstras, such as the eleven Rudras,

the eight Vasus, the twelve Ādityas, Prajāpati, the fortynine Maruts, the twin Asvinīkumāras, Indra and so on. And the word 'Maharṣayaḥ' should be taken to refer to the seven great sages, whose account is given in the commentary on verse 6 of this chapter.

By the latter half of this verse the Lord seeks to convey that the gods and all sages from whom this world has evolved have originated from Him; He is both their material and instrumental cause; and whatever learning, wisdom, energy, lustre and power are possessed by them are all derived from Him.

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम्।
असम्मूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते॥ ३॥

यः who; माम् Me; अजम् unborn; अनादिम् without beginning; च and; लोकमहेश्वरम् supreme Lord of the universe; वेत्ति knows (in reality); मर्त्येषु among men; असम्मूढः undeluded; सः he; सर्वपापैः of all sins; प्रमुच्यते is purged.

He who knows Me in reality as birthless and without beginning, and as the supreme Lord of the Universe, he, undeluded among men, is purged of all sins. (3)

Though 'manifesting Himself in various forms through His own Yogamāyā (divine potency), God is really birthless (IV.6), and is not born like other earthly beings. He simply plays the role of being born in order to gratify His devotees and establish righteousness on earth. To grasp this truth correctly with unquestioning faith and reverence is to know God as birthless. Even so God is the beginning or ultimate cause of all, but has no beginning Himself; He is eternal and dateless, and like other things he cannot be said to have started His career from a particular point of time. And to apprehend this truth properly with full faith and reverence is to know God as without beginning. Again, whatever regional gods there are, such as Indra, Varuṇa, Yama, Prajāpati and others, who are held to be divine in rank, God is the supreme Lord of them all; He is the supreme Almighty, the controller, guide, creator, destroyer, supporter, nourisher and protector of all. And to grasp this truth properly with unquestioning faith is to know God as the supreme Lord of the universe.

The latter half of this verse seeks to bring out the fruit of knowing God as unborn, without beginning and the supreme Lord of the Universe as explained above. The intention is to show that of all men in this world, he alone who possesses a correct knowledge of God's glory as indicated above knows God in reality.

Again, he alone who knows God in reality is 'undeluded among men'; the rest are all deluded. And he who has thoroughly grasped the reality of God naturally devotes the precious moments of his life to the constant practice of adoration in every way (XV.19); like sensually-minded people he does not remain engrossed in worldly enjoyments, taking them to be a source of delight. Hence being thoroughly purged of all sins of his present birth and past lives, he easily succeeds in realizing God.

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसम्मोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः।
सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च॥ ४॥

अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः।
भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः॥ ५॥

बुद्धिः reason; ज्ञानम् right knowledge; असम्मोहः unclouded understanding; क्षमा forbearance; सत्यम् truthfulness; दमः control of the senses; शमः control of the mind; सुखम् joy; दुःखम् sorrow; भवः evolution; अभावः dissolution; भयम् fear; च and; अभयम् fearlessness; एव as well; च and; अहिंसा non-violence; समता equanimity; तुष्टिः contentment; तपः austerity; दानम् charity; यशः fame; अयशः obloquy; भूतानाम् in creatures; पृथग्विधाः diverse; भावाः traits; मत्तः from Me; एव alone; भवन्ति emanate.

Reason, right knowledge, unclouded understanding, forbearance, veracity, control over the senses and mind, joy and sorrow, evolution and dissolution, fear and fearlessness, non-violence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame and obloquy,—these diverse traits of creatures emanate from Me alone. (4,5)

The function of the mind which determines what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, what is worthy of acceptance and what is worth rejecting, what is good and what is evil, is called 'Buddhi' or reason.

The term 'Jñāna' covers every form of knowledge, from ordinary worldly knowledge to the knowledge of the reality of God.

Regarding worldly enjoyments, which appear everlasting and delightful to all sensually-minded men, as transient, momentary and sorrowful, and refusing to be infatuated by them is called 'Asammoha' or unclouded understanding.

Harbouring evil intentions, doing an ill turn, usurping one's possessions, offering insult, causing hurt, using harsh or abusive language, indulging in calumny or malicious gossip, practising incendiarism, administering poison, committing murder and causing direct or indirect harm,—all these are offences which easily provoke anger and retaliation. Total absence of the spirit of retaliation even under such provocation and notwithstanding the power to retaliate, and seeking exemption for the offender from all punishment in this as well as in the next world is what is known as forbearance.

'Veracity' means representing in sweet and loving words what has been actually seen with the eyes, heard through the ears, or apprehended through the mind exactly as it has been seen, heard or apprehended.

'Dama' consists in exercising restraint over the senses running after sense-objects subjugating them and checking their waywardness; whereas 'Śama' means subduing the mind by exercising full control over the same.

'Sukha' denotes joys of all kinds derived from contact with agreeable objects and the withdrawal of disagreeable ones. Even so 'sorrow' covers all forms of suffering* caused by separation from agreeable objects and contact with disagreeable ones.

'Bhava' means coming into existence of the entire universe consisting of animate and inanimate beings at the time of creation; and its disappearance at the time of universal destruction is indicated by the word 'Abhāva'.

Agitation or perturbation of the mind

* Suffering has been classified in Hindu Śāstras under three heads: viz., (i) Ādhibhautika or that caused through the agency of men, beasts, birds, insects, moths and other creatures; (ii) Ādhidaivika or that resulting from natural calamities such as drought, excessive rainfall, earthquake, stroke of lightning and famine etc., and (iii) Ādhyātmika or that caused by distemper of the body, senses or mind.

caused by impending harm or cause of death is called 'Bhaya' (fear); and total absence of fear resulting from a sense of the omnipresence of God, or from any other cause, is known as 'Abhaya' (fearlessness).

'Ahiṁsā' or non-violence means non infliction of suffering in any form and at any time even in a small degree on any being whatsoever in thought, word and deed.

'Samatā' or equanimity denotes constant equipoise of mind, free from partiality and prejudice, in the midst of objects, actions and incidents etc. which are likely to throw one off one's balance such as joy and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat, praise and blame, honour and ignominy, friend and foe, etc.

'Tuṣṭi' or contentment is that uncomplaining attitude of mind which reconciles itself to every lot, taking it at the outcome of one's own good or evil destiny or as a decree of Providence.

'Tapas' or austerity consists in enduring hardships for the sake of one's Dharma or duty, and 'Dāna' or charity consists in surrendering one's own proprietary rights for the benefit of others. Even so good and bad reputation are known as 'Yaśa' and 'Ayaśa' respectively.

All these characteristics and feelings existing in diverse creatures and varying according to the temperament of each owe their very existence to His backing, power and presence. This is what is meant by the second half of verse 5.

It may be observed here that while in the above two verses the antitheses of 'Sukha', 'Bhava', 'Abhaya' and 'Yaśa', viz., 'Duḥkha', 'Abhāva', 'Bhaya' and 'Ayaśa' have been spoken of as proceeding from God, those of 'Kṣamā', 'Satya', 'Dama' and 'Ahiṁsā' etc. have not been so mentioned. How is that to be accounted for? The reason is not far to seek. It will be seen that entities like sorrow, dissolution, fear and obloquy etc. appear in this world just in order to enable beings to work out their evil destiny. Their emanation from God, who dispenses the fruit of our actions and controls the universe, is therefore quite in order. Vices and evil propensities like anger, mendacity, self-indulgence and violence etc., which are the antitheses of forbearance, veracity, sense-control and nonviolence etc., on the other hand, do not proceed from God. The *Gītā* attributes these, elsewhere, to 'desire', born of ignorance (*vide* III.37), and exhorts us to renounce them along with their root cause. That is why the antitheses of virtues and noble propensities like veracity etc. have not been mentioned in the present verse.

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा।
मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥ ६ ॥

सप्त महर्षयः the seven great seers; चत्वारः पूर्वे their four elders (Sanaka and others); तथा and; मनवः the fourteen Manus or progenitors of mankind (such as Svāyambhuva and his successors); मद्भावाः (who are all) devoted to Me; मानसाः जाताः were born of My will; येषाम् from whom; लोके in the world; इमाः प्रजाः all these creatures (have descended).

The seven great seers, their four elders (Sanaka and others), and the fourteen Manus or progenitors of mankind (such as Svāyambhuva and his successors), who are all devoted to Me, were born of My will; from them all these creatures in the world have descended. (6)

While describing the marks of the seven great seers, the scripture says:—

एतान् भावानधीयाना ये चैत ऋषयो मताः।
सप्तैते सप्तभिश्चैव गुणैः सप्तर्षयः स्मृताः॥
दीर्घायुषो मन्त्रकृत ईश्वरा दिव्यचक्षुषः।
वृद्धाः प्रत्यक्षधर्माणो गोत्रप्रवर्तकाश्च ये॥

(*Vāyu-Purāṇa* LXI.93-94)

"And those who dwell on the above sentiments of celestial seers*, are recognized as Ṛṣis or seers. They are seven in number and are possessed of the following seven virtues; hence they are called Saptarṣis. They are all long-lived and composers of Vedic Mantras or hymns, possessed of divine powers and transcendent vision and senior in merits, learning and age. They are credited with an intuitive or direct perception of Dharma or the divine law and are the founders of particular lines or stocks of families." It is these who propagate creation and regulate Dharma.†

These seven seers or Saptarṣis as they are called, change in every Manvantara or tenure of office of a Manu. The Saptarṣis mentioned in this verse have been spoken of by the Lord as Maharṣis, or great seers, and as born of His will. Therefore, they are of a higher order than Ṛṣis or ordinary seers. Saptarṣis of this class find mention in the *Śānti-Parva* of the *Mahābhārata*. With reference to these, God Himself, the Supreme Puruṣa, speaks as follows to Brahmā and the other celestials:—

मरीचिरङ्गिराश्चात्रिः पुलस्त्यः पुलहः क्रतुः।
वसिष्ठ इति सप्तैते मानसा निर्मिता हि ते॥
एते वेदविदो मुख्या वेदाचार्याश्च कल्पिताः।
प्रवृत्तिधर्मिणश्चैव प्राजापत्ये च कल्पिताः॥

(*Mahā., Śānti.,* 340.69-70)

"Marīci, Aṅgirā, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasiṣṭha—these seven great seers have been begotten by you out of your mind. They are all proficient in the Vedas, and I have made them the principal teachers of the Vedas. They direct the worldly way of life, and have been appointed by Me to carry on the duty of Prajāpati, the deity presiding over creation."

They are the Saptarṣis of the very first Manvantara, viz., the Svāyambhuva Manvantara, of the present Kalpa (*Vide Harivaṁśa*, VII.8-9). Therefore, it is these seven seers who are referred to in the present verse as 'Sapta Maharṣayaḥ'.‡

The words 'Sapta Maharṣayaḥ' in the

---

* For the marks of celestial seers *vide* commentary on verses 12 and 13 of this chapter.

† These seven seers are advocates of the worldly ways of life. Their views and mode of life are described as below:—

षट्कर्माभिरता नित्यं शालिनो गृहमेधिनः। तुल्यैर्व्यवहरन्ति स्म अदृष्टैः कर्महेतुभिः॥
अग्राम्यैर्वर्तयन्ति स्म रसैश्चैव स्वयंकृतैः। कुटुम्बिन ऋद्धिमन्तो बाह्यान्तरनिवासिनः॥
कृतादिषु युगाख्येषु सर्वेष्वेव पुनः पुनः। वर्णाश्रमव्यवस्थानं क्रियते प्रथमं तु वै॥

(*Vāyu-Purāṇa* 61.95-97)

"These great seers are constantly engaged in the six pursuits enjoined upon a Brāhmaṇa, viz., the study and teaching of the Vedas, performing sacrifices and officiating as priests in sacrifices performed by other and bestowing and accepting gifts. They maintain Gurukulas or seminaries in their hermitages for imparting instruction to Brahmacārīs and marry and preserve the sacred fire only for the continuity of the race. They have matrimonial and other relations only with those who belong to the same Varṇa or caste, and enjoy irreproachable objects of their own creation. They maintain wife and children, own cattle and other possession, and live both within and without the world of matter. At the beginning of every Yuga it is these seers who establish, for the first time, the insitution of Varṇas and Āśramas (the division of society into various grades and stages of life) again and again.

‡ All these seven seers are Prajāpatis of great religious austerity, possessing uncommon spiritual glow and wisdom. Being creators of beings, they are known as the 'Seven Brahmās' (*Mahā., Śānti.*, 208-3,4,5). Their brief sketches are given below:—

present verse cannot be interpreted to mean the seven seers of the present Manvantara, viz., Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, Bharadvāja, Gautama, Atri, Vasiṣṭha and Kaśyapa, because besides Atri and Vasiṣṭha none of these was born of the will either of God Himself or of Brahmā (the Creator). Therefore, instead of referring to these seven seers, the 'Sapta

(1) MARĪCI

This seer is held to be a part manifestation of a fraction of God. He has many wives, the chief of them being Sambhūti, a daughter of Prajāpati, Dakṣa, and Dharmavratā, the daughter of a Brāhmaṇa named Dharma. He has a large stock of descendants. Maharṣi Kaśyapa is one of his own sons. A portion of the *Padma-Purāṇa* was recited to him by Brahmā. Almost all the Purāṇas, the *Mahābhārata* and the Vedas too contain copious references to him. Brahmā delivered the *Brahma-Purāṇa* first of all to this sage. He is constantly engaged in the work of creation and maintenance of the world. Detailed accounts of this sage are to be found in the Vāyu, Skanda, Agni, Padma, Mārkaṇḍeya and Viṣṇu-Purāṇas and the *Mahābhārata* etc.

(2) AṄGIRĀ

He is a seer possessed of uncommon spiritual glow. He has many wives, three of whom are more prominent. Of these Surūpā, daughter of Marīci, bore Bṛhaspati; Svarāt, daughter of sage Kardama, gave birth to five sons, viz., Gautama, Vāmadeva and others; and Pathyā, daughter of Svāyambhuva Manu, brought forth three sons, Viṣṇu and others. *(Vāyu-Purāṇa.* LXV.); whereas Ātreyī, daughter of Agni, gave birth of many sons collectively known as the Āṅgirasas *(Brahma-Purāṇa)*. According to some scriptures Bṛhaspati was born of his wife Śubhā, *(Mahābhārata)*.

(3) ATRI

This seer has his abode in the south. Anasūyā, who is famous for her feminine chastity, is his consort. Anasūyā is a co-uterine sister of Bhagavān Kapila, being born of Kardama and Devahūti. Bhagavān Śrī Rāma accepted the hospitality of this great lady during His sojourn in the forest. Adorning the divine Mother, Śrī Sītā, with ornaments and clothes of various Kinds, Anasūyā also delivered to her her historic message on the duties of a virtuous woman.

Commanded by Brahmā to propagate the race, the great sage Atri, who is the most prominent among all expounders of the Vedas, repaired to the Ṛkṣa mountain with his wife Anasūyā, and devoted himself to the practice of austerities. Both Atri and his wife are great devotees of God. They performed rigorous penance and sought direct communion with God as a reward for their penance. Surrendering themselves to God, the Lord of the entire universe, they engaged themselves in constant thought of the Lord. The crown of their head emitted the fire of Yoga, which began to burn the three worlds. Pleased with their penance, the holy Trinity, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śaṅkara, simultaneously appeared before these devotees to bless them. Obtaining a direct vision of the three deities all at once, the seer and his wife had the object of their life fulfilled and they began to extol the Lord in a voice choked with emotion. The Lord insisted on their asking a boon. Having been commanded by Brahmā to procreate, Atri replied, "I invoked the Lord and sought His vision for obtaining a son, and I find all the three of You before me! You are all beyond human conception. How is it, then, that You have condescended to bless me thus? Pray tell me." Hearing these words of Atri, the three gods smiled and said, "O sage, you are of unfailing resolve. We three are the same as the object of your contemplation, three aspects of the same truth. You will have three sons, who will be part manifestations of Ourselves. As for yourself you have all your desires already fulfilled." Having uttered these words, the Trinity disappeared and thereafter incarnated themselves as the sons of Atri. A part of Bhagavān Viṣṇu appeared as Dattātreya, a part of Brahmā took the form of Candra (the moon-god), while a part of Śiva incarnated itself as the sage Durvāsā. Such is the glory of devotion! Those very gods who are beyond human conception assumed the forms of human children and sported in the lap of Anasūyā (Vālmīki's *Rāmāyana, Vanukāṇda, Śrīmad Bhāguvatu,* Bk. IV).

(4) PULASTYA

He is a great ascetic, pious and full of spiritual glow. He is an eminent Master of Yoga and a great adept in this branch of Knowledge. Once upon a time when sage Parāśara was performing a grand sacrifice

Maharṣayaḥ' of the present verse should be taken to mean the seers of the first Manvantara of the present Kalpa.

The words, 'Catvāraḥ Pūrve' should be taken to mean the eldest in creation, viz., Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra. They are God's own manifestations and appeared of their own will as the result of Brahmā's austere penance. Brahmā's own words with reference to them are:—

"The Lord Himself appeared in the form of the four seers, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra, who are collectively known as the four 'Sanas' (embodiments of austerity), as the result of the ceaseless penance done by me at the beginning of creation with the object of creating the different worlds. They fully expounded the true nature of the soul, which had been lost to the world during the dissolution at the end of the preceding

---

with the object of extirpating the Rākṣasas, Pulastya on the advice of Vaśiṣtha requested Parāśara to stop it, and the sacrifice was stopped at the instance of Pulastya. Highly pleased with this behaviour of Parāśara, Pulastya granted him a boon whereby Parāśara acquired knowledge of all the Śāstras.

Pulastya had several sons through his wives, Saṅdhyā, Pratīcī, Prīti and Havirbhū. Dattoli, more popularly known as Agastya, and the celebrated sage Nidāgha are his sons. Viśravā, the father of Kubera, Rāvaṇa, Kuṁbhakarṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa, is also a son of Pulastya. The various Purāṇas and the *Mahābhārata* contain numerous references to him. The Viṣṇu, Brahmavaivarta, Kūrma, Śrīmad Bhāgavata and Vāyu-Purāṇas and the *Udyoga-Parva* of the *Mahābhārata*, among others, contain detailed accounts of this seer.

(5) PULAHA

This great seer is possessed of great prowess and wisdom. Obtaining divine knowledge from sage Sanandana, he imparted the same to sage Gautama. Through his wives, Kṣamā, daughter of Prajāpati Dakṣa and Gati, daughter of sage Kardama, he got many children (*vide* Kūrma, Viṣṇu and Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇas).

(6) KRATU

This great seer also possesses exceptional spiritual glow. He married Kriyā, daughter of sage Kardama, and Sannati, daughter of Prajāpati Dakṣa. He begot eight thousand Ṛṣis collectively known as the Vālakhilyas, who stand facing the sun-god near His chariot and move with the latter uttering his praises. The Purāṇas contain many references to these Ṛṣis (*vide Śrīmad Bhāgavata,* Bk. IV; *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa,* Pt.I).

(7) VASIṢṬHA

The austerity, spiritual glow, forbearance and piety of this great seer are universally Known. The Purāṇas record divergent accounts of his birth, which are all correct, relating as they do to different Kalpas or cycles of creation. The name of his wife is Arundhatī, who is an exceptionally virtuous woman and the foremost of all loyal and devoted wives. Vasiṣtha was the family priest of the Kings of the Solar Race. It was the temptation of seeing with his own eyes, and living in the holy company of, Bhagavān Śrī Rāma, the ideal and perfect Man, that induced him to accept this office, and he constantly strove for the welfare of the solar race. Obtaining Śrī Rāma as his own disciple, he deemed the mission of his life as having been fulfilled.

It is said that once there was a controversy between Vasiṣtha and Viśvāmitra. The subject of discussion was: Which is superior—austerity or Satsaṅga (the company of holy men)? Vasiṣtha maintained the superiority of Satsaṅga, while Viśvāmitra declared austerity as of greater value. Finally the question was referred to Śeṣa, the serpent-god, for arbitration. Hearing the point at issue Bhagavān Śeṣa replied, "O blessed ones, both of you can see that the weight of the entire globe rests on my head. If either of you relieves me of this burden for a short while, I may have breathing time to think over the question and settle your dispute." Viśvāmitra had great faith in his own austerities; he, therefore, sought to lift up the earth by parting with the fruit of ten thousand years of his penance, but in vain. The earth began to quake. Thereupon Vasiṣtha easily lifted the earth by parting with the fruit of only half a second of the Satsaṅga practised by him, and remained standing with the load for a long time. Viśvāmitra then enquired of the arbitrator: How is it that you do not pronounce your decision even though so much time has elapsed? "O great seer !" Śeṣa smilingly replied, "the question stands decided by itself without my

Kalpa, whereby seers realized the truth in their own heart." (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* II.vii.5)*.

Here it may be observed that Sanaka and others had no issue at all, whereas the present verse says that all these creatures in the world have descended from the seers and Manus mentioned therein. Therefore, the construction put upon the words 'Catvārāḥ Pūrve' presents a contradiction in terms. But this contradiction is only apparent, and not real. For the Sanaka brothers, being the pioneers of the path of Renunciation (Nivṛtti), are the teachers of the whole universe. Hence all those who follow the path shown by them are in a way their disciples and may therefore be taken to be their progeny.

In the course of a cosmic day as many as fourteen Manus appear and hold office in succession, and the tenure of office of each Manu is called a 'Manvantara'. A Manvantara consists of a little more than seventy-one 'Caturyugīs' or rounds of the four Yugas (Satyayuga, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kaliyuga). Reckoned in human years, a Manvantara extends to 30,67,20,000 odd years; whereas according to the computation of the celestials, it consists of 8,52,000 odd years (*Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* 1.3).† Each Manvantara has its own Saptarṣis or group of seven seers for regulating the operation of Dharma or the Divine Law and maintaining the universe. With the change of a Manu at the conclusion of a Manvantara, other functionaries of the universe, such as the seven seers, gods, Indra, and the sons of Manu also change. The names of the Manus of the present Kalpa are: Svāyambhuva, Svārociṣa, Uttama, Tāmasa, Raivata Cākṣuṣa, Vaivasvata, Sāvarṇi, Dakṣasāvarṇi, Brahmasāvarṇi, Dharmasāvarṇi, Rudrasāvarṇi,

---

arbitration. When ten thousand years' penance cannot equal half-a-second's Satsaṅga, you can yourself decide which is superior." Knowing thus the glory of Satsaṅga, the two sages returned to their abodes, much delighted at heart.

Vasiṣṭha got this name because he is endowed with Vasu, or the eight siddhis (occult powers), and is the best of all householders. The enemies of man in the shape of lust, anger, greed, infatuation etc. could not even enter the precincts of his hermitage. Though fully able to retaliate, he felt no provocation and did not inflict the least injury on Viśvāmitra, the murderer of his hundred sons. Pleased with him, Lord Śiva granted to him lordship over the Brāhmaṇas. Among those who possess true knowledge of Sanātana Dharma, the name of Vasiṣṭha deserves to be cited first of all. Detailed accounts of his life appear in the *Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Devī-Bhāgavata,* the Viṣṇu, Matsya, Vāyu, Śiva and Liṅga Purāṇas and other books.

* तप्तं तपो विविधलोकसिसृक्षया मे आदौ सनात्स्वतपसः स चतुःसनोऽभूत्।
प्राक्कल्पसम्प्लवविनष्टमिहात्मतत्त्वं सम्यग् जगादमुनयो यदचक्षतात्मन्॥

† According to *Sūryasiddhānta* (an old and authoritative treatise on Astronomy) the duration of a Manvantara etc. has been computed as below:—

A Caturyugī (one full round of the Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali Yugas) consists of 43,20,000 human years or 12,000 celestial years. This period is also called a 'Mahāyuga'. Seventy-one rounds of such Mahāyugas go to make a 'Manvantara'. A period equal in duration to a Satyayuga or 17,28,000 human years intervenes the expiration of each Manvantara and the commencement of another, and is technically known as a Sandhyā or twilight. During this Sandhyā occurring at the end of each Manvantara the earth goes under water. In every Kalpa or Cosmic day there are fourteen Manvantaras with an equal number of twilights. Besides these, there is one more twilight of the same duration at the beginning of each Kalpa. In this way the fourteen Manvantaras comprised in each Kalpa consist of 71 Caturyugīs each, besides 15 twilights each of the duration of a Satyayuga. The 14 Manvantaras thus comprise in all 14x71=994 Mahāyugas plus 15 twilights, which go to make another 6 Mahāyugas. In this way each Kalpa comprises 994+6=1,000 Mahāyugas. The following figures represent the duration of each of these divisions of them:—

Devasāvarṇi, and Indrasāvarṇi.* At the end of a Kalpa consisting of fourteen Manvantaras the entire group of Manus changes.

All these seers and Manus are full of reverence and love for God; it is for this reason that the qualification 'Madbhāvāḥ' has been used with reference to them.

Although the scriptures speak of the seven seers as well as of Sanaka, Sanandana and others as having been born of the mind of Brahmā, the Lord refers to them here as having been born of His own will. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that it is God Himself who assumes the form of Brahmā for the creation of the universe. Therefore, there is no contradiction when the Lord speaks of those born of Brahmā's mind as having been born of His own will.

The next verse proceeds to declare the reward of knowing the glory and manifestations of God described in the preceding five verses.

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः।
सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः॥ ७॥

यः who; **मम** Mine; **एताम्** this; **विभूतिम्** supreme divine glory; **च** and; **योगम्** supernatural power; **तत्त्वतः** in reality; **वेत्ति** knows; **सः** he; **अविकम्पेन योगेन** through unfaltering devotion; **युज्यते** gets established (in Me); **अत्र** about this; **संशयः न** there is no doubt.

	Solar or human years	Celestial years or the years of gods
One Caturyugī (Mahāyuga or celestial Yuga)	43,20,000	12,000
Seventy-one Caturyugīs	30,67,20,000	8,52,000
Sandhi or twilight at the beginning of each Kalpa	17,28,000	4,800
Fourteen Sandhyās following the Manvantaras	2,41,92,000	67,200
One Manvantara with its Sandhi	30,84,48,000	8,56,800
Fourteen Manvantaras with their corresponding Sandhis	4,31,82,72,000	1,19,95,200
Fourteen Manvantaras with the twilight at the beginning of each Kalpa, or one full Kalpa	4,32,00,00,000	1,20,00,000

Kalpa is only another name for a cosmic day, and each cosmic day is followed by a cosmic night of the same length. The full length of Brahmā's life is a hundred years according to this measure. This period of time is technically known as 'Para'. Having completed half of his period, Brahmā is now passing through the other half. The present time represents the first day or Kalpa of his fifty-first year. Since the beginning of this Kalpa six Manvantaras with their Sandhyās have already passed; whereas the number of Sandhyās, including the one occurring at the beginning of the Kalpa, that have elapsed so far is seven. The present is the seventh or Vaivasvata Manvantara, of which 27 Caturyugas have passed. We are now passing through the twilight at the beginning of the Kaliyuga of the 28th Caturyuga. *(Sūryasiddhānta, Madhyamādhikāra,* 15 to 24).

Up to the Saṁvat year 2004 of the Vikrama Era Kaliyuga has completed 5,048 years. The Sandhyā occurring at the beginning of each Kaliyuga extends to 36,000 years. According to this calculation 30,952 years of the Sandhyā itself remain to be completed.

* For a detailed amount of these Manus see Chapters 1, 5 and 13 of Bk.VIII of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata.* Their names slightly vary in the various Purāṇas. The names given here have been taken from the *Bhāgavata.*

He who knows in reality this supreme divine glory and supernatural power of Mine gets established in Me through unfaltering Devotion; of this there is no doubt. (7)

The word 'Vibhūtim', with the demonstrative adjective 'Etām' qualifying it, covers entities like Buddhi (the faculty of determining the nature of things) etc. and great seers and others declared by the Lord in the preceding three verses as emanating from Him, as well as the objects, abstract ideas and gods referred to by Him in such statements as "I am the sapidity in water (VII.8)" and "I am the Vedic ritual, I am the sacrifice (IX.16)" and so on.

And the word 'Yogam' stands for that transcendent and marvellous power of God, the secret of which is not fully known either to the gods or to the great sages (X.2,3); which accounts for the fact that; though Himself both the material and instrumental cause of entities born of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, He always remains apart from them, justifying the statement 'neither I exist in them, nor they in Me (VII.12)" by dint of which, while carrying on the creation, maintenance and destruction etc., of the whole universe He governs the entire creation according to certain definite laws; which makes Him the supreme Lord of all the worlds, the disinterested friend of all beings, the enjoyer of all sacrifices and other noble acts, the sustainer of all and all-powerful; by which He holds the entire universe in a fraction of His being (X.42) and manifests Himself of His own free will, age after age, in various forms for various purposes and while doing all this remains entirely aloof from all actions, from the entire creation and from all transformations, such as birth etc., and which has been spoken of in IX.5 as His wonderful power of divine Yoga.

In this way the entire universe is God's own creation, and everything subsists in a fraction of His being. Therefore, whatever object in the world appears as endowed with power and has some speciality about it, or better still the whole creation, should be regarded as a manifestation of, or the same as, God; while God himself should be recognized as the creator and destroyer of the entire universe, the almighty and universal lord, the sustainer of all, supremely compassionate, the disinterested friend and inner controller of all. This is what is meant by 'knowing in reality the supreme glory and supernatural power of God.'

The word 'Yogena' accompanied by the adjective 'Avikampena' qualifying it, stands for that unflinching and exclusive devotion to God *(vide Gītā* XI.54) which is also named as 'undivided devotion' in XIII.10, and as 'the Yoga of exclusive devotion' in XIV.26, which has been referred to in VII.1 under the name of 'Yoga', and the character of which has been discussed in verses 13, 14 and 34 of the Chapter IX and in verse 9 of the present chapter. And realizing God through such devotion is what is meant by getting united with, or established in God.

Having spoken of God-realization through the practice of unfaltering devotion, the Lord now discusses in two verses the character of this Yoga of Devotion.

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः॥ ८॥

अहम् I (the soul of the universe); **सर्वस्य** of all; **प्रभवः** (am) the source; **मत्तः** (and) because of Me; **सर्वम्** everything (in the world); **प्रवर्तते** moves; **इति** thus; **मत्वा** knowing; **भावसमन्विताः** full of devotion; **बुधाः** the wise; **माम्** Me (the supreme Deity); **भजन्ते** (constantly) worship.

I am the source of all creation and everything in the world moves because of Me; knowing thus the wise, full of devotion, constantly worship Me. (8)

The whole universe has emanated from God; hence God is both the material and efficient cause of the entire creation, and therefore the best of all. To recognize this fact is to know that He is the source of all creation.

The wheel of this creation is revolving through God's own power of Yoga; it is through His ruling power that the sun, moon stars and planets like the earth are regularly coursing within their respective orbits; it is under His direction that all living beings are working out their own destiny after being born in the higher or lower order of creation according to their good or evil actions. In this way to recognize God as the ruler and director of all is to know that everything in the world moves becuase of God.

The word 'Budhāḥ', qualified by the adjective 'Bhāvasamanvitāḥ', stands for those enlightened devotees who are full of exclusive love for God, have unflinching faith in Him and are solely devoted to Him, and who have full knowledge of His virtues and glory.

Thus recognizing God as the creator, destroyer and director of the entire universe he who constantly remembers and embraces the Lord through the mind, intellect and senses, with utmost faith and love, as described in the following verse, is said to worship Him according to the spirit of the present verse.

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम्।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च॥ ९॥

मच्चित्ताः those who keep their mind fixed on Me; **च** and; **मद्गतप्राणाः** those who have surrendered their lives to Me; **परस्परम् बोधयन्तः** enlightening one another (about My greatness); **च** and; **माम्** Me; **कथयन्तः** speaking of; **नित्यम्** ever; **तुष्यन्ति** remain contented; **च** and; **रमन्ति** take delight (in Me).

With their mind fixed on Me, and their lives surrendered to Me, enlightening one another about My greatness and speaking of Me, My devotees ever remain contented and take delight in Mė. (9)

The word 'Maccittāḥ' refers to those devotees, who, knowing God as their supreme lover and greatest friend, nay, their nearest and dearest one and highest goal, have their mind exclusively fixed on Him (VIII.14; IX.22); who have no attraction, attachment or love for anything else than God; who are ever engrossed in the thought of His name, virtues, glory, sports and being; and who, even while acting in accordance with the scriptural injunctions and performing ordinary functions of the body, much less at the time of meditation, never forget God even for a moment.

And the word 'Madgataprāṇāḥ' has been used with reference to those who live and breathe solely and entirely for God and whose senses also function for His sake

alone; to whom even a moment's separation from God is unbearable, who eats and drinks, walks and moves, sleeps and keeps awake, and carries on all other activities for His sake alone, and has no personal interest in those activities.

Loving and faithful devotees of God fondly indulge in discussing with, and bringing home to, one another the virtues, glory, truth, sports and mysteries of God on the basis of their personal experiences and arguing their case with great skill. This is what is meant by enlightening one another about the greatness of God.

Reciting and chanting God's names, virtues, glory, stories and character and popularizing them through sermons and discourses and offering praises to God etc. are all included in speaking of God.

Feeling supreme gratification in doing all this is what is meant by 'ever remaining contented.' Hearing, reflecting on, chanting and reciting the names, virtues, glory, stories and character etc. of God are solely responsible for the peace, joy and gratification enjoyed by the devotee who remains ever contented as mentioned above. Worldly objects have nothing to do with his joy and gratification.

Duly hearing, reflecting on and chanting the names, virtues, glory, stories, character, truth and mysteries of God, and doing everything according to His liking, behest and direction for the sole object of developing love for Him, such a devotee ever visualizes Him as actually present before his eyes, and constantly enjoys His sight and touch, chats with Him and carries on various other sports with Him. This is what is meant by ever taking delight in God.

The Lord now tells us in the next two verses how He rewards the devotees who adore Him in the above manner.

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम्।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते॥ १०॥

तेषाम् On those; सततयुक्तानाम् ever united (through devotion with Me); प्रीतिपूर्वकम् with love; भजताम् worshipping (Me); तम् what; बुद्धियोगम् Yoga of wisdom; ददामि I confer; येन through which; माम् Me; ते they; उपयान्ति come to.

On those ever united through devotion, with Me and worshipping Me with love, I confer that Yoga of wisdom through which they come to Me. (10)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Teṣām' stands for the loving and disinterested devotees of God referred to in the preceding two verses as 'Budhāḥ' and 'Maccittāḥ' etc. Similarly, the adjective 'Satatayuktānām' represents the aggregate of all the qualifications mentioned in the preceding verse such as 'Maccittāḥ' 'Madgataprāṇāḥ', 'Parasparam Bodhayantaḥ' and 'Mām Kathayantaḥ'. Again, the idea conveyed by the words 'Tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca' is succinctly expressed in 'Prītipūrvakam Bhajatām. The intention is to convey that the devotees referred to in the preceding verse, far from worshipping God out of any desire for enjoyment, constantly adore Him in the manner stated in the preceding verse, disinterestedly and with exclusive love, without seeking any return for their devotion.*

The Lord infuses into the mind of His devotees the capacity to grasp correctly the

* A devotee of this type says in the *Bhāgavata:—*

truth relating to the absolute, formless Divinity along with the secret of Its glory and greatness, as also the truth relating to His qualified aspect with and without form along with His sports, mysteries, greatness and glory etc. This is what is meant by 'conferring the Yoga of wisdom'. It is this Buddhiyoga which has been spoken of in Chapters VII and IX above as 'Jñāna coupled with Vijñāna'; and direct realization of God through this Yoga of wisdom is what is meant by attaining Him.

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता॥ ११॥

तेषाम् अनुकम्पार्थम् in order to shower My grace on them; **अहम्** I; **एव** Myself; **आत्मभावस्थः** dwelling in their heart; **अज्ञानजम्** born of ignorance; **तमः** the darkness; **भास्वता ज्ञानदीपेन** by the shining light of wisdom; **नाशयामि** dispel.

In order to shower My grace on them I, dwelling in their heart, dispel the darkness born of ignorance by the shining light of wisdom. (11)

By the statement that the Lord Himself dispels the darkness of ignorance of the devotee, He seeks to convey that the devotee need not undertake any other Sādhanā for the purpose. The object is achieved through the mercy of God alone.

The word 'Tamaḥ' qualified by the adjective 'Ajñānajam', stands for the veiling power of ignorance that has existed from time without beginning, and due to which man fails to realize the virtues, glory and character of God. By the statement "dwelling in the heart I dispel their ignorance" the Lord reveals the glory of devotion and exculpates Himself from the charge of partiality. The Lord thereby seeks to convey that He constantly resides in the heart of all as their Inner Controller and yet people do not feel His presence within their heart; that is why He fails to dispel the ignorance of their heart. His loving devotees, however, as indicated in the preceding verse, constantly see Him as if actually present in their heart; it is therefore that He easily dispels the darkness of their ignorance.

The word 'Jñānadīpena', with the adjective 'Bhāsvatā' qualifying it, signifies that transcendent wisdom, free from the faults of doubt and error etc., which has been spoken of as 'Buddhiyoga' or the Yoga of wisdom in the preceding verse, and as 'Jñāna coupled with Vijñāna' in Chapters VII and IX, and whereby one is able to know full well the truth relating to the absolute, formless Divinity along with Its grandeur and glory, as well as that relating to the qualified aspect of God with and without form along with His sports, mysteries, glory and greatness etc. and to dispel the darkness of ignorance through such wisdom is to tear away from the heart of the devotee the veil of ignorance which obstructs the knowledge of Truth.

न नाकपृष्ठं न महेन्द्रधिष्ण्यं न सार्वभौमं न रसाधिपत्यम्।
न योगसिद्धीरपुनर्भवं वा समञ्जस त्वा विरहय्य काङ्क्षे॥

(VI.xi.25)

"O all-virtuous Lord ! without Thee I seek neither abode in the uppermost heaven nor the position of Brahmā (the Creator), neither sovereignty over the entire globe nor dominion over the nether worlds, neither the achievements of Yoga nor even lasting freedom from rebirth."

As a matter of fact, the light of wisdom dispels the darkness of ignorance and brings God-realization at the same time. If, however, some sequence is maintained between the two processes, it should be understood that the removal of ignorance takes place earlier and is immediately followed by God-realization.

The Lord discussed in Chapter VII the subject which He introduced in the very opening verse of that chapter as leading to a knowledge of His integral Self and which He undertook in the next verse to expound under the name of 'Jñāna, and Vijñāna', or the knowledge of the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspect of God. Thereafter in Chapter VIII, He threw further light on the same subject even while answering the seven questions of Arjuna. But since His method of exposition was different in that chapter, He undertook once more at the beginning of Chapter IX to discuss the subject of Jñāna and Vijñāna and expounded it at full length in all its details. Again, in order to elucidate the subject further and in a different language the Lord undertook in the opening verse of Chapter X to discuss the subject again; and having devoted the next five verses to a description of His Yogic power and glories He declared in the seventh that knowledge of the latter leads to His own realization through unfaltering devotion. Thereafter, describing in the eighth and the ninth the mental attitude and conduct of those engaged in worshipping Him through the discipline of Bhakti, the Lord wound up the topic by pointing out in the tenth and eleventh the fruit of such worship, viz., the attainment of the Yoga of wisdom, which dispels the darkenss of ignorance and leads to God-realization, thereupon realizing that knowledge of the Yogic power and glories of God is exceedingly helpful in God-realization, Arjuna now devotes the next seven verse to praises of the Lord, praying in the end that the Lord may be pleased to describe in detail His own Yogic power and glories.

अर्जुन उवाच

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान्।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम्॥ १२॥
आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा।
असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे॥ १३॥

भवान् You; परम् ब्रह्म (are) the transcendent Eternal; परम् धाम the supreme abode; परमम् पवित्रम् (and) the greatest purifier; त्वाम् You; सर्वे all; ऋषयः the seers; शाश्वतम् दिव्यम् पुरुषम् (as) the eternal divine Puruṣa; आदिदेवम् the primal Deity; अजम् unborn; विभुम् (and) all-pervading; आहुः speak of; तथा even so; देवर्षिः नारदः the celestial sage Nārada; असितः देवलः the sages Asita and Devala; व्यासः the great sage Vyāsa; च and; स्वयम् एव Yourself too; मे to Me; ब्रवीषि proclaim.

Arjuna said: You are the transcendent Eternal, the supreme Abode and the greatest purifier; all the seers speak of You as the eternal divine Puruṣa, the primal Deity, unborn and all-pervading. Likewise speak the celestial sage Nārada, the sages Asita and Devala and the great sage Vyāsa; and Yourself too proclaim this to me. (12,13)

By the first half of the twelfth verse Arjuna intends to say that the absolute known as the 'transcendent Eternal' is no other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa; that His supreme Abode too, being the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, divine in character and hence identical with God, is the same as Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and that His names, virtues, glory, stories and character, when heard, reflected on and chanted, are supremely purifying in every way.

The word 'Ṛṣayaḥ'*, qualified by the adjective 'Sarve', stands for Ṛṣis like Mārkaṇḍeya, Aṅgirā and so on, whom Arjuna mentions as the authority for his statement.†

The following are the marks of a Devarṣi or celestial sage:—

"Seers living in the celestial regions should be known as the blessed Devarṣis. Besides them, there are other Devarṣis as well who are distinguished by their knowledge of the past, present and future and strict adherence to truth. In other words, celestials, Brāhmaṇas, and members of the royal class who are self-illumined and have established contact with the world of their own free will, who are famed throughout the world for their austerity, who have imparted spiritual knowledge to devotees (like Prahlāda) even in their mother's womb, who are the revealers of Mantras or sacred formulas, who by virtue of their supernatural powers (Siddhis) have unrestricted access everywhere, and are ever surrounded by Ṛṣis, are all Devarṣis.‡" *(Vāyu-Purāṇa* LXI.88,90,91,92)

---

* ऋषीत्येष गतौ धातुः श्रुतौ सत्ये तपस्यथ । एतत् संनियतं यस्मिन् ब्रह्मणा स ऋषिः स्मृतः॥
गत्यर्थादृषतेर्धातोर्नामनिर्वृत्तिरादितः । यस्मादेष स्वयम्भूतस्तस्माच्च ऋषिता स्मृता॥

(Vāyu-Purāṇa LIX. 79.81)

"The root 'Ṛṣ' is used in the sense of motion, (Knowledge), hearing truth and austerity. Brahmā, the Creator, has given the title of 'Ṛṣi' to him who definitely combines in himself all these virtues. The word is derived from the root 'Ṛṣ' signifying motion, and the name of Ṛṣi has been given to these seers because they were born of themselves in the beginning of creation."

† Describing the glory of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Duryodhana, the patriarch Bhīṣma, the great embodiment of truth and virtue, said:—

"Bhagavān Vāsudeva (the son of Vasudeva) is the object of worship of all gods and the best of all beings. He is virtue personified and the knower of the secret of Dharma, the bestower of boons and the satisfier of all desires; He is the doer, the deed and the Lord Himself. The past, present and future, the morning and evening twilights, the four quarters, the heaven and all laws are the creations of this very Lord. It is this high-souled and imperishable Lord who created the Ṛṣis, austerity and the Prajāpatis, who have brought forth the entire creation. He is the Creator of Saṅkarṣaṇa himself, the eldest of the all creation. Śeṣa (the serpent-god), popularly known as 'Ananta' (the eternal being), who carries the weight of the entire globe including the mountains on his head, also emanated form Him. It is He who takes the form of the divine Boar, the Man-Lion, and the divine Dwarf; He is the father and mother of all. There is none superior to Him. 'Keśava' as He is called, He is the embodiment of supreme lustre and the grandfather of all beings; the seers call Him Hṛṣikeśa. He is the teacher, the forefather and the preceptor. He who wins the favour of Śrī Kṛṣṇa attains the imperishable abode. He who, when confronted with danger, seeks refuge in Śrī Kṛṣṇa and offers praises to Him attains supreme happiness."

ये च कृष्णं प्रपद्यन्ते ते न मुह्यन्ति मानवाः। भये महति मग्नांश्च पाति नित्यं जनार्दनः।

(Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma-Parva, LXVII.24)

"Those who take refuge in Śrī Kṛṣṇa never get deluded. Śrī Kṛṣṇa ever protects those who are involved in great danger."

‡ देवलोकप्रतिष्ठाश्च ज्ञेया देवर्षयः शुभाः॥
देवर्षयस्तथान्ये च तेषां वक्ष्यामि लक्षणम् । भूतभव्यभवज्ज्ञानं सत्याभिव्याहृतं तथा॥
सम्बुद्धास्तु स्वयं ये तु सम्बद्धा ये च वै स्वयम् । तपसेह प्रसिद्धा ये गर्भे यैश्च प्रणोदितम्॥
मन्त्रव्याहारिणो ये च ऐश्वर्यात् सर्वगाश्च ये । इत्येते ऋषिभिर्युक्ता देवद्विजनृपास्तु ये॥

There are many Devarṣis, the names of some of whom are given below:—

देवर्षी धर्मपुत्रौ तु नरनारायणावुभौ।
वालखिल्याः क्रतोः पुत्राः कर्दमः पुलहस्य तु॥
पर्वतो नारदश्चैव कश्यपस्यात्मजावुभौ।
ऋषन्ति देवान् यस्मात्ते तस्माद्देवर्षयः स्मृताः॥

(*Vāyu-Purāṇa* LX.83—85)

"The two sons of Dharma, Nara and Nārāyaṇa, Kratu's sons, collectively known as the Vālakhilyas, Kardama, son of Pulaha, Parvata, Nārada and the two sons of Kaśyapa, Asita and Vatsara, because they can exercise control even over the celestials, are called Devarṣis."

Devarṣi Nārada, Asita, Devala and Vyāsa —all these great Ṛṣis know of the real truth about God, and are great lovers and devotees of God, and possessed of supreme wisdom.*

* Though there have been more than one person bearing the name of Nārada, history records no two Devarṣis of this name. The scriptures speak of him as the 'mind' of God. Possessing supreme knowledge of the divine Truth and supreme love for God, he is a celibate of the order known as Ūrdhvaretās (so-called because their generative fluid or creative energy has attained an upward flow). He is the foremost teacher of Bhakti or Devotion. The world owes a great deal to him. It was he who inspired great devotees like Prahlāda, Dhruva and Ambarīṣa, and showed them the way to Bhakti; and the world further to him two incomparable gems of Indian literature, viz., *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. It was he who imparted instruction even to a man of great spiritual wisdom like Śrī Śukadeva.

In his previous incarnation, Nārada was the son of a maid-servant who used to scour the unclean utensils of great sages. When he was only five years of age, His mother died of an accident. Thus freed from all worldly ties, he left all human habitation and retired into the woods, where he sat under the foot of a big tree and began to meditate on God. In the course of this meditation, his thoughts got focussed on one point and the Lord revealed Himself in his heart. But having blessed him with a glimpse of His soul-enchanting beauty for a short while, He suddenly disappeared from his view. Feeling greatly disturbed at His sudden disappearance, he concentrated his mind once more and began to meditate on the Lord, but failed to obtain His vision any more. Meanwhile he heard an ethereal voice say, "O child, you will not be blessed with My vision any more in your present incarnation. Having cast off this mortal coil you will attain Me as one of My own associates." These words of the Lord brought him great consolation, and he moved about in the world, free from attachment, awaiting the last moment. At the appointed hour he left physical body, and in the next Kalpa he assumed a divine form and was reborn from the mind of Brahmā. Since then, observing a vow of unbroken celibacy, he has been singing the praises of the Lord to the accompaniment of his lute (*Bhāgavata* I.vi).

Chapter V of *Mahābhārata, Sabhā-Parva,* contains the following account of Devarṣi Nārada:—

"Devarṣi Nārada knows the real meaning of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, is adored by the celestials, has specialized in the branch of literature known as the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, possesses knowledge of the events of the previous Kalpas, knows the essence of virtue and justice and is the best scholar of Śikṣā (phonetics), Kalpa (the science of ritual). Vyākaraṇa (grammar), Āyurveda (the science of medicine) and other branches. Nay, he is an expert in reconciling scriptural injunctions of a contradictory nature, a powerful orator, well-versed in politics, possessed of great intelligence, memory and wisdom, a poet, clever in distinguishing good from evil, capable of ascertaining the reality of things by employing the various methods of reasoning, proficient in discovering the beauties and fallacies of syllogistic reasoning and capable of meeting the objections of scholars like Bṛhaspati. He knows in reality the truth about Dharma (religious merit), Artha (worldly riches), Kāma (enjoyment) and Mokṣa (liberation), is capable of directly perceiving by his Yogic power every incident taking place in this world as well as in the higher and lower worlds, clever in distinguishing the paths of Knowledge and Action, expert in giving lessons to the gods and demons on dispassion, a master statesman proficient in the Knowledge of war and peace, an adept in determining what should be done and what should not be done, incomparable in the employment of the six expedients of royal policy, well-versed in all the scriptures, and well-versed in the science of warfare, a master of music, a great devotee of God, a repository of all learning and virtues, the very prop of morality and the universal friend, and has access everywhere." The Upaniṣads, Purāṇas and Itihāsas are replete with his sacred stories.

* * *

They are regarded as highly respected and truthful sages of their time; that is why their names have been specially mentioned in the verse. And, moreover, they are ever engaged in singing the praises of God. The chief mission of their life is to propagate the glory of God. The *Mahābhārata* too contains several references to these and many other Ṛṣis and Maharṣis singing the glories of God. The patriarch Bhīṣma recapitulates in the *Bhīṣma-Parva* what one or other of those sages spoke with reference to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa has already referred to His own incomparable glory in IV.6 to 9; V.29; VII.7 to 12; IX.4 to 11, and 16 to 19; and X.2, 3, 8. This is what Arjuna has in mind when he says that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is revealing His own glory to him. Arjuna is, therefore, convinced that what he says in these verses about Śrī Kṛṣṇa is, quite correct, and he has no doubt about it.

The sages Asita and Devala are related as father and son. The *Kūrma-Purāṇa* contains the following reference to them:—

एतानुत्पाद्य पुत्रांस्तु प्रजासन्तानकारणात् । कश्यपः पुत्रकामस्तु चचार सुमहत्तपः॥
तस्यैवं तपतोऽत्यर्थं प्रादुर्भूतौ सुताविमौ । वत्सरश्चासितश्चैव तावुभौ ब्रह्मवादिनौ॥
असितस्यैकपर्णायां ब्रह्मिष्ठः समपद्यत । नाम्ना वै देवलः पुत्रो योगाचार्यो महातपाः॥

(*Kūrma-Purāṇa* XIX.1,2,5)

"Having begotten these sons with the object of multiplying creation, the sage Kaśyapa began once more to practise hard penance with the intention of getting more sons. As the result of his severe penance he got two more sons. Vatsara and Asita by name. Both of them possessed divine knowledge and were teachers of Veda. Asita begot through his wife Ekaparṇā a son, Devala by name, who was well-versed in the Vedas, a teacher of Yoga and a great ascetic."

Asita and Devala are both seers of the Ṛgveda. Ṛṣi Devala attained perfection through the worship of Lord Śiva. Both these seers are ancient and highly accomplished Ṛṣis. Pratyūṣa, one of the eight Vasus, also had son who was known as Ṛṣi Devala (*Harivaṁśa,* III.44).

* * *

The sage Vedavyāsa is believed to be a part manifestation of God. He was born in an Island (Dvīpa), which got him the title of 'Dvaipāyana'. On account of his dark complexion he was known as 'Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana'; and because he arranged the Vedas, he was called Vedavyāsa'. He is the son of the great sage Parāśara. His mother's name was Satyavatī. As soon as he was born he retired into the woods with the intention of practising austerities. He has full knowledge of the reality about God and is a peerless poet. He is a boundless and fathomless ocean of knowledge, the farthest limit of erudition and the highest perfection of poetry. The unfolding of Vyāsa's heart and speech constitute the very lustre and foundation of world's knowledge.

The *Brahmasūtras* were written by Bhagavān Vyāsa himself. He was, again, the author of such a wonderful scripture as the *Mahābhārata*. The eighteen principal Purāṇas and many more subsidiary Purāṇas were compiled by him. The history of India bears testimony to this fact. It is from the gift of wisdom bequeathed by Vyāsa that the whole world is seeking light today.

Every Dvāpara has its own Vyāsa for arranging the Vedas. The present Vyāsa, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, son of Parāśara is the 28th Vedavyāsa of the current or Vaivasvata Manvantara. He taught Ṛgveda to his principal disciple Paila, Yajurveda to Vaiśampāyana, Sāmaveda to Jaimini and Atharvaveda to Sumantu, and further taught the Itihāsas and Purāṇas to the great and highly talented sage Romaharṣaṇa, who was a Sūta (charioteer) by birth.

* Devarṣi Nārada said, "Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Creator of all the worlds, omniscient and the supreme Lord of all deities and Sādhyas."

The sage Mārkaṇḍeya said, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the sacrifice of sacrifices and the penance of penances, and embodies in Himself the past, present and future."

Bhṛgu said, "He is the god of gods and the most ancient Viṣṇu."

Vyāsa said, "He confers Indrahood on Indra, and is the Supreme Deity of all deities."

Aṅgirā said, "He is the Creator of all beings."

सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव।
न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥ १४॥

केशव O Kṛṣṇa; यत् what; माम् Me; वदसि You tell; एतत् सर्वम् all that; ऋतम् (as) true; मन्ये I believe; भगवन् O Lord; ते Your; व्यक्तिम् manifestation (through sport); न neither; दानवाः demons; न nor; हि indeed; देवाः gods; विदुः know.

Kṛṣṇa, I believe as true all that You tell me, Lord, neither demons nor gods are aware of Your manifestation through sport. **(14)**

The monosyllable word 'Ka' represents Brahmā (the Creator), 'A' signifies Viṣṇu (the Protector) and 'Īśa' is a synonym of Śiva (Destroyer of the universe). Keśava, therefore, is the Deity who represents all these three aspects of God. Addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Keśava' in this verse, Arjuna, therefore, intends to convey that unquestionably He is the Supreme Lord responsible for the creation, sustenance and destruction of the whole universe.

The pronounce 'Etat' and 'Yat', used in this verse, point to all that has been stated by the Lord from the beginning of Chapter VII to verse 11 of the present Chapter regarding his own virtues, glory, character, greatness mystery and supernatural powers etc., and which constitutes a direct admission on His part of His divinity. And recognizing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as God Himself, the integral

Sanatkumāra and others said, "His head pervades the heavens and His arms cover the earth; all the three worlds are contained in His belly. He is the eternal Puruṣa. The Sādhaka can know Him only after attaining purification of the heart. He is considered to be the Best even among seers who are sated through Self-realization; and He is the ultimate resort even of the lofty-minded royal sages, who never turn their back on the field of battle (*Mahā., Bhīṣma.*, Cap. 68).

In Chapter XII of the *Mahābhārata, Vana-Parva*, the great devotee among women, Draupadī, quotes the following words of a number of sages:—

The sages Asita and Devala said, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the Prajāpati (the Lord of creation) during the primal creation of beings, and is the sole creator of all the worlds."

Paraśurāma said, "He is Viṣṇu Himself; none can vanquish Him. He is the sacrifice, the sacrificer and the deity worshipped through sacrifice."

Nārada said, "He is the supreme Lord of all deities known as the Sādhyas, as well as of all blessings."

"Just as a child plays at will with its dolls, so does Śrī Kṛṣṇa sport in the company of Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and the other gods."

Besides the above, Bhagavān Vyāsa says in the *Mahābhārata:*—

"There is a sacred town in Saurāṣṭra (the modern Kathiawad), named Dvārakā, wherein resides Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the most ancient and supreme Puruṣa. He is Sanātana Dharma personified. Brahmans well-versed in the Vedas and men who have realized the Self dèclare high-souled Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be Sanātana Dharma itself He is the most sacred of all sacred objects, the holiest of the holy, and the most auspicious of all auspicious things. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, possessed of lotus-like eyes, is the eternal god of all the gods in the three worlds. He is the imperishable soul and perishable matter, the conscious self, the supreme Lord and one endowed with a form which is beyond human conception." (*Mahā., Vana.*, 8.24 to 27).

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* Devarṣi Nārada, addressing the pious king Yudhiṣṭhira, says, "O king, of all men you are indeed highly blessed, inasmuch as sages who lend sanctity to the worlds frequently visit your palaces, and the supreme Brahma Himself lives here in the guise of a human being. Indeed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme Brahma whom sages seek to realize as the bliss of absolute repose. He is your beloved friend, your maternal cousin, the object of your worship, your Guide and teacher. Tell me, then, who can compare with you in the matter of good luck ?" (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* VII.xv.75-76).

Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, the god of gods, the creator and destroyer of the universe, all-sustaining, all-pervading and omnipotent, the ruler and inner controller of all, and not entertaining the least doubt about the truth of His statements is what is meant by believing all that He says as true.

The *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* says:—

ऐश्वर्यस्य समग्रस्य धर्मस्य यशसः श्रियः।
ज्ञानवैराग्ययोश्चैव षण्णां भग इतीरणा॥

(VI.v.74)

"Entire glory, entire virtue, entire renown, entire prosperity, entire wisdom and total dispassion—these six are collectively known as 'Bhaga'."

He who combines in Himself all these virtues is called 'Bhagavān'.

The *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* further says:—

उत्पत्तिं प्रलयं चैव भूतानामागतिं गतिम्।
वेत्ति विद्यामविद्यां च स वाच्यो भगवानिति॥

(VI.v.78)

"He who is aware of the creation and dissolution of the universe, of the appearance and disappearance of beings, as well as of Vidyā (wisdom) and Avidyā (nescience), should be designated as 'Bhagavān'."

By addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Bhagavān', Arjuna means to say that he is God Himself, the repository of all glory and omniscient.

The word 'Vyaktim' denotes all the various forms assumed by God by way of sport from time to time for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe, for the rehabilitation of virtue, for redeeming the devotees by blessing them with His sight, for the protection of gods and destruction of the demons, and for various other reasons. By saying that the secret of His manifestation in various forms is known neither to the demons nor to the gods Arjuna intends to convey that even though the demons are endowed with the capacity to assume various forms by dint of their Māyā or conjuring power and the gods are capable of perceiving supersensuous objects, yet they are unable to perceive the divine character of His various forms, or to comprehend His divine power, and art of assuming those forms, the occasion for such manifestation and the inwardness of His sports. Much less can an ordinary mortal expect to know these can things.

स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम।
भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते॥ १५॥

भूतभावन O creator of beings; भूतेश O Ruler of all creatures; देवदेव O god of gods; जगत्पते O Lord of the universe; पुरुषोत्तम O supreme Puruṣa; त्वम् You; स्वयम् एव Yourself; आत्मना by Yourself; आत्मानम् Yourself; वेत्थ know.

O Creator of beings, O Ruler of creatures, god of gods, the Lord of the universe, O supreme Puruṣa You alone know what You are by Yourself. (15)

By the vocatives used in this verse for Śrī Kṛṣṇa Arjuna seeks to convey that He is the creator of the whole universe, the controller and supporter of all, the object of universal adoration and higher than perishable matter and the imperishable soul known as His 'Aparā' and 'Parā' nature respectively.

Again, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the beginning of the entire creation; His virtues, glory, sports greatness, and forms etc. are all infinite. Hence no one else can have full knowledge of His virtues etc.; they are known to Him and Him alone. And His knowledge of His

own self is not like the knowledge of an external object acquired by an individual through his or her intellect, and with the help of the scriptures etc. God being the very embodiment of knowledge, He knows Himself through Himself. There is no distinction of knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge in Him.

वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः।
याभिर्विभूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि॥ १६॥

हि therefore; त्वम् You (alone); दिव्याः आत्मविभूतयः Your divine glories; अशेषेण in full; वक्तुम् अर्हसि are able to describe; याभिः विभूतिभिः by which glories; इमान् लोकान् (all) these worlds; व्याप्य pervading; तिष्ठसि You stand.

Therefore, You alone can describe in full Your divine glories, whereby You stand pervading all these worlds. (16)

The word 'Ātmavibhūtayaḥ' qualified by the adjective 'Divyāḥ', covers all those objects or beings in the universe that are possessed of lustre, strength, learning, glory, virtue and power. Since all those glories are God's own manifestations and because no one other than He knows them in their entirety, He alone and no one else can describe them in full. This is what Arjuna means by the first half of this verse. Again, by the latter half of the verse Arjuna seeks to convey that he would not be contented with a description of only those glories which are manifested in this mortal world alone, but that he should like to hear a full account of all His glories by which He stands revealed in various forms in all the worlds including the celestial regions.

कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन्।
केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया॥ १७॥

योगिन् O Master of Yoga; अहम् I; कथम् how; सदा ever; परिचिन्तयन् meditating on; त्वाम् You; विद्याम् may know; च and; भगवन् O Lord; केषु केषु भावेषु in what particular forms; मया by me; चिन्त्यः असि You are to be meditated upon.

O Master of Yoga, through what process of continuous meditation shall I know You ? And in what particular forms, O Lord, are You to be meditated upon by me ? (17)

Arjuna puts two questions to the Lord in the present verse. Firstly, he seeks to know some device whereby he may be able to practise constant remembrance of the Lord with faith and love, and may know Him fully well along with His virtues, glory and reality. And, secondly, he is anxious to be told which particular objects, forming part of this universe of sentient and insentient beings should be taken to be His manifestations and meditated upon as such. In other words, Arjuna wants to know how and in what particular forms he should constantly think of Him so as to be able to comprehend His virtues, glory, truth and secrets easily.

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन।
भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम्॥ १८॥

जनार्दन O Kṛṣṇa; आत्मनः Your; योगम् power of Yoga; च and; विभूतिम् glory; भूयः once more; विस्तरेण in detail; कथय tell me; हि because; अमृतम् Your nectar-like words; शृण्वतः (in) hearing; मे to me; तृप्तिः satiety; न अस्ति is not.

Kṛṣṇa, tell me once more in detail Your power of Yoga and Your glory; for I know no satiety in hearing Your nectar-like words. (18)

He of whom all men seek their desired objects is called Janārdana (जनैः अर्द्यते). By addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Janārdana'. Arjuna indicates that all men approach Him for the attainment of their desired objects, and also that He is fully capable of granting all their prayers. Arjuna thereby hopes that his prayer too will be granted by the Lord.

'Yoga' is that divine potency of God by which He manifests Himself in the form of this universe and thereby reproduces Himself in various forms; and His manifestation in those forms is called His 'Vibhūti' or glory. Both these words have already occurred in verse 7 above, and their meaning has been fully explained in our commentary on the same. Realization of God through unfaltering devotion has been mentioned in that verse as the reward of knowing His Yoga and Vibhuti in reality. Therefore, with a view to knowing full well the secret of His Yoga and Vibhūti, Arjuna requests the Lord to describe them in detail again and again.

The words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa appear very sweet to Arjuna; he finds such a stream of joy flowing from them that his mind never gets wearied of drinking of it. The more he drinks of that nectar, the more his thirst for the same grows. He feels as if he should go on drinking that nectar for ever. Therefore, he prays that Śrī Kṛṣṇa should go on pouring that divine nectar into his ever thirsty ears. He should not feel deterred by the thought that such and such a thing has already been said or that the subject has been amply thrashed out so that there is no need to dilate on it any more.

In response to this prayer of Arjuna for a detailed and full description of His power of Yoga and glory, the Lord first points out the limitless range of His magnitude and then undertakes to describe only His outstanding glories.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः।
प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे॥ १९॥

कुरुश्रेष्ठ O chief of Kurus, Arjuna; हन्त now; दिव्याः आत्मविभूतयः My divine glories; ते to you; प्राधान्यतः in broad detail; कथयिष्यामि shall relate; हि because; मे विस्तरस्य to My magnitude; अन्तः limit; न अस्ति there is not.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, now I shall tell you My conspicuous divine glories; for there is no limit to My magnitude. (19)

By addressing Arjuna as 'Kuruśreṣṭha' the Lord seeks to convey that, being the best among Kurus, he was qualified to here the description of His glories.

The whole universe being a manifestation of God, all objects comprised therein are, in a general way, manifestation of His glory; but they are not His divine glories. The words 'divine glories' should be taken to denote only such objects or beings which manifest

the majesty, strength, learning, glory, lustre and power of God in a special degree. With reference to such glories the Lord says in this verse that they are limitless, so that it was wholly impossible to describe them all in full. Hence He undertakes to describe only the most conspicuous among them.

In the preceding verse Arjuna requested the Lord to describe in detail (in full) His power of Yoga as well as His glory. With reference to this prayer the Lord says that it was not possible to give a full description of even His outstanding glories much less of all His glories.*

As promised in the preceding verse the Lord now first of all describes His divine glories in verses 20 to 39:—

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च॥ २०॥

गुडाकेश O Arjuna (*lit.*, a conqueror of sleep); अहम् I; सर्वभूताशयस्थितः seated in the heart

---

* The universe consists of an infinite number of objects and an infinite variety of creatures. For their proper regulation and control these diverse orders of objects, ideas and beings have been classified into various broad divisions or groups under God's immutable laws; and each broad division or group has been placed under the control of a supervisor or chief, so that the processess of their creation, maintenance and destruction may be carried on strictly according to law. The Rudras, Vasus. Ādityas, Sādhyas, Viśvedevas, Maruts, Pitṛdevas, Manus and Saptarṣis etc., are the various order of these functionaries or chiefs. They are believed to have both an embodied and unembodied form. All of them represent, so many glories of God.

The *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* says:—

सर्वे च देवा मनवः समस्ताः सप्तर्षयो ये मनुसूनवश्च। इन्द्रश्च योऽयं त्रिदशेशभूतो विष्णोरशेषास्तु विभूतयस्ताः॥ (III.i.46)

"All the gods, all Manus, the seven seers, as well as the sons of Manus, and Indra, the chief of gods,—all these are special manifestations or glories of Bhagavān Viṣṇu."

Besides the above, special representatives are duly chosen from the various order of creations for the proper functioning of creation. In this selection, the choice particularly falls on those who manifest God's lustre, energy, strength, learning, knowledge and power in a special degree. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of them all as His glories or manifestations.

In Chapter LXX of the *Vāyu-Purāṇa* we read the following account:—"The creation of beings by Kaśyapa having been over, the said Prajāpati selected from the various orders of creation those who excelled their group in merit and glory and for the governance of those groups made them lords over the rest. Thus the moon was made the king of the stars and planets; Bṛhaspati was appointed as the chief of Āṅgirasas (the son of Aṅgirā); Śukrācārya was appointed as the head of the Bhārgavas (the scions of Bhṛgu; Viṣṇu was made the chief of the Ādityas (sons of Aditi); Pāvaka (the god of fire), of the Vasus; Dakṣa, of the Prajāpatis (Lords of creation); Prahlāda, of the Daityas; Indra, of the Maruts; Nārāyaṇa, of the Sādhyas; Śaṅkara, of the Rudras; Varuṇa was made the ruler of the waters; Kubera, of the Yakṣa (a class of demigods); Śūlapāṇi (Bhairava), of the Bhūtas and Piśācas; the ocean, of the rivers; Citraratha, of the Gandharvas (the celestial bards); Uccaiḥśravas, of the horses; the lion, of the beasts; the bull, of he quadrupeds; Garuḍa, of the birds; Śeṣa, of the snakes and other reptiles; Vāsuki, of the Nāgas; Takṣaka, of other varieties of snakes and Nāgas; the Himālaya range, of the mountains; Vipracitti, of the Dānavas; Vaivasvata, of the manes; Parjanya (the god of rains), of the seas, rivers and clouds; Kāma (the god of Love), of the Apsarās (celestial hymphs); Saṁvatsara the year, of the various divisions of time such as the seasons and months etc.; Sudhāmā, of the East, Ketumān, of the West and Vaivasvata Manu was made the king of all human beings. The administration and maintenance of the entire creation is being carried on by these functionaries." The description of the glories of God contained in the present chapter agrees in many respects with the above description.

of all beings; आत्मा the (universal) self; च even so; भूतानाम् of (all) beings; आदिः the beginning; च and; मध्यम् the middle; च and; अन्तः the end; अहम् एव I alone (am).

Arjuna I am the universal Self seated in the heart of all beings; so I alone am the beginning and middle and also the end of all beings. (20)

'Guḍākā' means sleep. And a conqueror of sleep is called 'Guḍākeśa'. Addressing Arjuna by this word, the Lord is complimenting him on his attentiveness. The word 'Ātmā', qualified, by the compound adjective 'Sarvabhūtāśayasthitaḥ', signifies the conscious spirit or soul residing in the heart of all living beings and referred to elsewhere as the 'Parā' Prakṛti (higher nature) and the 'Kśetrajña' (Knower of the field)—*vide* VII.5; XIII.1. Being a fragment of God (XV.7), it is in essence the same as God Himself (XIII.2). It is therefore that the Lord declares the soul as identical with Him.

The word 'Bhūtānām' stands for all embodied beings both sentient and insentient. The creation, maintenance and destruction of beings proceed from God. All beings emanate from Him, exist in Him, and even at the time of final dissolution get merged in Him. In other words, He is the root cause and substratum of all. This is what is meant by the Lord when He calls Himself the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.

आदित्यानामहं विष्णुर्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान्।
मरीचिर्मरुतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी॥ २१॥

अहम् I (am); आदित्यानाम् among the (twelve) sons of Aditi; विष्णुः Viṣṇu; ज्योतिषाम् (and) among the luminaries; अंशुमान् रविः the radiant sun; अहम् I; मरुताम् of the Maruts (wind-gods, forty-nine in number); मरीचिः the glow; नक्षत्राणाम् (and) among stars; शशी (their Lord) the moon; अस्मि am.

I am Viṣṇu among the twelve sons of Aditi, and the radiant sun among the luminaries; I am the glow of the Maruts* (the fortynine wind-gods), and the moon among the stars. (21)

The twelve sons of Aditi, viz., Dhātā, Mitra, Aryamā, Indra, Varuṇa, Aṁśa, Bhaga, Vivasvān, Pūṣā, Savitā, Tvaṣṭā and Viṣṇu, are known as the twelve Ādityas. Viṣṇu† is their

* The names of the fortynine wind-gods are: Sattvajyoti, Āditya, Satyajyoti, Tiryagjyoti, Sajyoti, Jyotiṣmān, Harita, Ṛtajit, Satyajit, Suṣeṇa, Senajit, Satyamitra, Abhimitra, Harimitra, Kṛta, Satya, Dhruva, Dhartā, Vidhartā, Vidhāraya, Dhvānta, Dhuni, Ugra, Bhīma, Abhiyu, Sākṣipa, Īdṛk, Anyādṛk, Yādṛk, Pratikṛt, Ṛk, Samiti, Saṁrambha, Īdṛkṣa, Puruṣa, Anyādṛkṣa, Cetasa, Samitā, Samidṛkṣa, Pratidṛkṣa, Maruti, Sarata, Deva, Diśa, Yajuṣ, Anudṛk, Sāma, Mānuṣa and Viś (*vide Vāyu-Purāṇa* LXVII.123—130). The *Garuḍa-Purāṇa* and other Purāṇas give slightly different names. But the name 'Marīci' is not to be found anywhere. It is for this reason that the word 'Marīci' has not been interpreted as the name of a wind-god, but as the glow or rays of all the Maruts.

The sons born of Dakṣa's daughter, Marutvatī, are also called Maruts (*vide Harivaṁśa*). The Purāṇas describe their birth in different ways and under different names in the different Manvantaras.

† धाता मित्रोऽर्यमा शक्रो वरुणस्त्वंश एव च। भगो विवस्वान् पूषा च सविता दशमस्तथा॥
एकादशस्तथा त्वष्टा द्वादशो विष्णुरुच्यते। जघन्यजस्तु सर्वेषामादित्यानां गुणाधिकः॥

(Mahā., Āai., LXV.15-16)

Lord and the best of them all. It is therefore that the Lord calls Viṣṇu His own self.

Among luminous objects such as the sun, moon, stars, lightning and fire etc., the sun is the most resplendent, of all; hence among all luminaries the Lord has singled out the sun as His own self.

The fortynine Maruts or wind-gods were born of the spiritual glow of goddess Diti's religious observance in the shape of meditation on God. It was because of that spiritual glow that they could not be slaughtered in their mother's womb.* Hence the Lord speaks of that glow of theirs as His own self.

Being the Lord of the twentyseven asterism, or lunar mansions, such as Aśvinī, Bharaṇī, Kṛttikā and so on, and the chief of all other stars, the moon is one of the chief glories of God. Hence the Lord speaks of the moon as His own self.

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः।
इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना॥ २२॥

वेदानाम् among the Vedas; सामवेदः अस्मि I am Sāmaveda; देवानाम् among the gods; वासवः अस्मि I am Indra; इन्द्रियाणाम् of the organs of perception etc.; मनः अस्मि I am the mind; च and; भूतानाम् in living beings; चेतना अस्मि I am the consciousness (life-energy).

Among the Vedas, I am the Sāmaveda; among the gods, I am Indra. Among the organs of perception etc., I am the mind; and I am the consciousness (life-energy) in living beings. (22)

Among the four Vedas,—Ṛk, Yajuṣ, Sāma and Atharva,—the Sāmaveda is full of sweetest psalms and the most charming praises of God; hence it occupies the foremost place among the Vedas. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of the Sāmaveda as His own self.

Being the king and ruler of all gods, such as the sun-god, moon-god, the god of fire and the god of air etc., Indra is the foremost of them all. Hence the Lord calls him His own self.

Of the eleven Indriyas or organs of perception etc., viz., the organs of sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell and speech, hands and feet, the organs of generation and

* Having lost many of her sons in the war with gods Diti propitiated her husband, Kaśyapa, by her loving services. Kaśyapa, who was the foremost of all ascetics, pleased her in his turn by granting her a boon. Diti asked of him most glorious son capable of killing Indra. The great sage Kaśyapa granted her the desired boon, and while conferring that terrible boon told her that if she could bear the foetus in her womb for a hundred years observing strict purity and self-restraint, and keeping her mind constantly fixed on God, she would surely get a son capable of killing Indra. Knowing the foetus in Diti's womb as his deadly enemy, Indra, the chief of celestials, too made his appearance there to serve Diti with great humility. He kept himself by her side all the twentyfour hours waiting for an opportunity to do something whenever he found some lapse in her purity. At last, only a few days before the expiry of a hundred years, it so happened that Diti went to bed, one day, without washing her feet and was soon overtaken by sleep. Availing himself of that opportunity, Indra entered her womb with his weapon, a thunderbolt, in hand, and split the great foetus into seven parts. Smitten by the thunderbolt, the foetus raised a loud cry. Indra tried to hush it up by repeatedly whispering into its ears 'Mā rodiḥ' (don't cry). Finding that, though split into seven parts, the foetus was still alive. Indra got much exasperated and again split each of those seven parts into seven. Even though multiplied fortynine times, the foetus still remained alive. Indra was now convinced that it would not die. These fortynine parts became known as the mighty Maruts or wind-gods. They got the collective name of 'Maruts' from Indra's words addressed to them: 'Mā rodiḥ' (don't cry). (see *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, Part I, Ch. 21).

evacuation and the mind, the last-named, viz., the mind, is not only the controller and director of the rest, but the subtlest and best of them all; hence it occupies the foremost place among them. It is therefore that the Lord declares it to be His own self.

The word 'Cetanā' in this verse signifies the principle of consciousness existing in beings, which is a faculty of the mind, whereby they experience pleasure and pain and cognize other objects, and which has been enumerated in XIII.6 as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'. It is the main faculty responsible for the various experiences of living beings, hence the Lord speaks of it as His own self.

रुद्राणां शङ्करश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम्।
वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम्॥ २३॥

रुद्राणाम् of the eleven Rudras (gods of destruction); **शङ्करः** Lord Śiva; **अस्मि** I am; **च** and; **यक्षरक्षसाम्** of the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas; **वित्तेशः** (I am) the Lord of riches, Kubera; **अहम्** I; **वसूनाम्** of the (eight) Vasus; **पावकः** the god of fire; **अस्मि** I am; **च** and; **शिखरिणाम्** among the mountains; **मेरुः** (I am) the mountain Meru.

Among the eleven Rudras (gods of destruction); I am Śiva; and among the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas; I am the Lord of riches (Kubera). Among the eight Vasus, I am the god of fire; and among the mountains, I am the Meru. (23)

The eleven Rudras are: Hara, Bahurūpa, Tryambaka, Aparājita, Vṛṣākapi, Śambhu, Kapardī, Raivata, Mṛgavyādha, Śarva and Kapālī.* Of these, Śambhu or Śaṅkara is the lord of the rest, and the bestower of blessedness and blessedness itself. Therefore, the Lord declares him to be His very self.

Kubera† is the chief of the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, and the best among them; he is best known as a regional god or Lokapāla and the Lord of riches. Therefore, the Lord said that He was Kubera.

The eight Vasus are: Dhara, Dhruva, Soma, Ahaḥ, Anila, Anala, Pratyūṣa and Prabhāsa‡ Anala or the god of fire is the chief among them and carries oblations to the gods. He is also regarded as the mouth of God. It is therefore that the Lord calls the god of fire His very self.

The Meru mountain is believed to be the

---

* हरश्च बहुरूपश्च त्र्यम्बकश्चापराजितः। वृषाकपिश्च शम्भुश्च कपर्दी रैवतस्तथा॥
मृगव्याधश्च शर्वश्च कपाली च विशाम्पते। एकादशैते कथिता रुद्रास्त्रिभुवनेश्वराः॥

(Harivaṁśa, I.iii.51-52)

† Kubera is a grandson of the sage Pulastya and a son of Viśravā. He was born of Devavarṇinī a daughter of sage Bharadvāja. Pleased with his long and arduous penance, Brahmā asked him to seek a boon from him. He sought from him the custodianship of the riches of the universe. Brahmā thereupon said, "I am also anxious to appoint someone as the fourth guardian of the universe; therefore, I call upon you to accept this high office as Indra, Yama and Varuṇa have done." It was Brahmā again who made a gift to him of the celebrated aerial car known as Puṣpaka. Since then Kubera has held the office of the god of riches. Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa and others were born of his step-mother, Kaikasī *(Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa, Uttarakāṇḍa,* III). The celebrated Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva, who had been turned into a pair of Arjuna trees by the curse of Nārada and were redeemed by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, were the sons of no other than Kubera. *(Vide Śrīmad Bhāgavata* X.10)

‡ धरो ध्रुवश्च सोमश्च अहश्चैवानिलोऽनलः। प्रत्यूषश्च प्रभासश्च वसवोऽष्टौ प्रकीर्तिताः॥

(Mahā., Ādi., LXVI. 18)

centre of the stars and the main divisions of the world and the repository of gold and jewels. Its peaks are the highest in the world. Being thus the chief of mountains, the Meru has been declared to be the very self of the Lord.

पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम्।
सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामस्मि सागरः ॥ २४ ॥

पुरोधसाम् among the priests; मुख्यम् (their) chief; बृहस्पतिम् Bṛhaspati; माम् Me; विद्धि know; पार्थ O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; अहम् I; सेनानीनाम् among warrior-chiefs; स्कन्दः am Skanda (the generalissimo of the gods); च and; सरसाम् among the waters; सागरः ocean; अस्मि am.

Among the priests, Arjuna, know Me to be their chief, Bṛhaspati. Among warrior-chief, I am Skanda (the generalissimo of the gods); and among the waters; I am the ocean. (23)

Bṛhaspati* is the preceptor of Indra, the chief of the celestials, the family priest of the gods, the greatest repository of learning and wisdom, the foremost of all the priest of the world and the head of the Āṅgirasas (sons of Aṅgirā). Therefore, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa calls him His own self.

Skanda is also known by the name of Kārtikeya. He has six heads and twelve arms. A son of Lord Śiva†, he is the generalissimo of the gods. He is the foremost of all generals in the world. It is therefore, that the Lord declares him to be His very self.

Among all seats of water in the world the ocean‡ is the largest and is believed to be their lord. Hence the ocean is their chief representative; and it is therefore that the Lord declares it to be His own self.

महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम्।
यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥ २५ ॥

अहम् I; महर्षीणाम् among the great seers; भृगुः the sage Bhṛgu; गिराम् (and) among words; एकम् अक्षरम् the one syllable OM; अस्मि am; यज्ञानाम् among offerings; जपयज्ञः the offering to Japa; स्थावराणाम् (and) among the immovables; हिमालयः the Himālaya mountain; अस्मि I am.

---

* Bṛhaspati is the most illustrious son of Maharṣi Aṅgirā. He was the chief of the seven seers that held office in the second or *Svārociṣa* Manvantara of the present Kalpa (*Harivaṁśa,* VII.12; *Matsya-Purāṇa* IX.8). He is a great scholar. It was he who taught the Vedas with their limbs and other auxiliary branches of learning, the six systems of philosophy, the Smṛti texts and Āgama etc., to the Lord when he assumed the form of a Dwarf (*Bṛhaddharma-Purāṇa, Madhya.,* XVI.69—73). It was his son, *Kaca,* who learnt the science of reviving the dead from Śukrācarya. Bṛhaspati is the family priest of Indra, the chief of celestials. The sublime teachings that he imparted to Indra from time to time form a most useful study for the humanity. Accounts of these teachings are to be found in the Śānti and Anuśāsana Parvas of the *Mahābhārata.*

† In some books he is held to be born of Dakṣa's daughter Swāhā through Agni, the god of fire (*Mahābhārta, Vanaparva,* 223). The *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas contain wonderful stories about him.

‡ The word 'ocean' in this verse means all the oceans taken together.

Among the great seers, I am Bhṛgu; among words, I am the sacred syllable OM. Among offerings, I am the offering of Japa (muttering of sacred formulas); and among the immovables, the Himālaya. (25)

Maharṣis there are many; their distinctive marks and the names of the ten most prominent of them are given below:—

"The mind-born sons of Brahmā are all independent in the matter of birth and endowed with supernatural powers. That which is not bounded by limits, in other words, that which is infinite in extent, and which, though all-pervasive, is yet visible to us, is called 'Mahat'. And those wise men who having transcended the limits of the human intellect depend entirely on Him who is infinite in virtues (Mahāntam Ṛṣanti), are called Maharṣis. Bhṛgu, Marīci, Atri, Aṅgirā Pulaha, Kratu, Manu, Dakṣa, Vasiṣtha and Pulastya—these are the ten principal Maharṣis. They all sprang of their own will from the mind of Brahmā and are possessed of supernatural powers. Because God Himself appeared through Brahmā in the form of these seers, they are called Maharṣis."* (*Vāyu-Purāṇa* LIX.82-83, 89-90).

Bhṛgu† is the chief of all great seers. He is a great devotee of God, highly enlightened and full of spiritual glow: hence the Lord declares him to be His own self.

The substantive 'Gir' (the uninflected form of 'Girām') denotes a word expressive of meaning, and the word OM, also known as the 'Praṇava' is termed as the 'one syllable' (VIII.13). Of all significant words 'Praṇava' stands the foremost; for it is an appelation of God (XVII.23). The repetition of this word brings God-realization and there is identity between word and its meaning. Hence the Lord speaks of the 'Praṇava' as His own self.

Japa or repetition of the Divine Name involves no violence in any form, and the practice of Japa leads to the direct perception of God. The Code of Manu also speaks very highly of Japa.‡

---

* ईश्वराः स्वयमुद्भूता मानसा ब्रह्मणः सुताः। यस्मान्न हन्यते मानैर्महान् परिगतः पुरः॥
यस्मादृषन्ति ये धीरा महान्तं सर्वतो गुणैः। तस्मान्महर्षयः प्रोक्ता बुद्धेः परमदर्शिनः॥
भृगुर्मरीचिरत्रिश्च अङ्गिराः पुलहः क्रतुः। मनुर्दक्षो वसिष्ठश्च पुलस्त्यश्चेति ते दश॥
ब्रह्मणो मानसा ह्येत उद्भूताः स्वयमीश्वराः। प्रवर्तत ऋषेर्यस्मान्महांस्तस्मान् महर्षयः॥

† Among the mind-born sons of Brahmā, Bhṛgu is a prominent figure. He has successively held the position of one of the seven seers in the Svāyambhuva, Cākṣuṣa and other Manvantaras. In his line have appeared a number of seers, revealers of Mantras or sacred hymns, and founders of independent Gotras or families. He holds a position of great eminence among the seers. He married Khyāti, a daughter of Dakṣa, who gave birth to two sons, Dhātā and Vidhātā by name, and a daughter named Śrī. This latter became the Consort of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa. The celebrated sage Cyavana too was begotten by him. His sons Jotiṣmān, Śukṛti, Haviṣmān, Tapodhṛti, Nirutsuka and Atibāhu have figured as the chief among the seven seers in different Manvantaras. He is one of the greatest seers and revealers of Mantras. It was he who tested the Sāttvika character of Śrī Viṣṇu's forbearance by kicking His chest. In commemoration of that incident Bhagavān Viṣṇu still bears on His chest the mark of the kick in the shape of a footprint Having been entrusted with the work of creation, Bhṛgu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Aṅgirā, Marīci, Dakṣa, Atri and Vasiṣtha are also known as the "Nine Brahmās". Almost all the Purāṇas are replete with references to this sage (*vide Harivaṁśa*, the *Matsya, Śiva, Brahmāṇḍa, Devī-Bhāgavata, Mārkaṇḍeya, Padma, Vāyu* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata).*

‡ विधियज्ञाज्जपयज्ञो विशिष्टो दशभिर्गुणैः। उपांशुः स्याच्छतगुणः साहस्रो मानसः स्मृतः॥
"Japayajña is ten times more valuable than a ritual; the same, when practised in a low whisper; is a hundred times more valuable while mental Japa is a thousand times more valuable than the same."

Hence 'Japayajña' excels all other forms of sacrifice, and it is in order to bring out the superiority of 'Japayajña to every other offering that the Lord calls it His very self.

That which has a fixed position or is immovable is called 'Sthāvara'. Mountains, because they are immovable, fall under the category of 'Sthāvaras'.

The Himālaya is the foremost of them all. It is a most sacred place for the practice of austerities and is helpful in the attainment of liberation. The divine sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa performed their austerities on the Himalayan peaks. On top of this, the Himālaya is the king of mountains. Hence the Lord speaks of it as His very self.

अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः।
गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः॥ २६॥

सर्ववृक्षाणाम् of all trees; **अश्वत्थः** (I am) the Aśvattha (the holy fig tree); **देवर्षीणाम्** among the celestial sages; **नारदः** the sage Nārada; **गन्धर्वाणाम्** among the Gandharvas (the celestial musicians); **चित्ररथः** Citraratha (the king of Gandharvas); **च** and; **सिद्धानाम्** among the Siddhas (perfect souls); **कपिलः मुनिः** (am) the sage Kapila.

Among all trees, I am the Aśvattha (the holy fig tree); among the celestial sages, Nārada; among the Gandharvas (celestial musicians), Citraratha; and among the Siddhas, I am the sage Kapila. (26)

The holy fig tree* *(ficus religiosa)* is held to be the ruler of the kingdom of plants and the most sacred of all trees; hence the Lord declares it to be His very self.

For the marks of a Devarṣi or celestial sage the reader is referred to the commentary on verses 12 and 13 above, where they have been already discussed. Nārada is the chief of all such Devarṣis. Besides this, he is a great devotee, a highly enlightened soul and an expert revealer of Mantras. Hence it is that the Lord declares him to be His very self. For a detailed account of Nārada to the reader is referred to the footnote below the commentary on verses 12 and 13.

The Gandharvas are a particular class of celestial beings. They are celestial musicians and actors. In the celestial regions

* "The Purāṇas speak in very high terms of the Aśvattha tree. The *Skanda-Purāṇa* says:—

मूले विष्णुः स्थितो नित्यं स्कन्धे केशव एव च।
नारायणस्तु शाखासु पत्रेषु भगवान् हरिः॥
फलेऽच्युतो न संदेहः सर्वदेवैः समन्वितः॥
स एव विष्णुर्द्रुम एवं मूर्तो महात्मभिः सेवितपुण्यमूलः।
यस्याश्रयः पापसहस्रहन्ता भवेन्नृणां कामदुघो गुणाढ्यः॥

(Skanda-Purāṇa, Nāgara-Khaṇḍa—247,41,42,44)

"In the root of the holy fig tree resides Viṣṇu; in the trunk, Keśava; in the branches, Nārāyaṇa; in the leaves, Lord Hari, and in the fruits abides Acyuta in conjunction with all the gods. There is not the least doubt about this. This tree is Viṣṇu Himself appearing in a concrete form; exalted souls worship the sacred root of this tree. Dependence on this tree wipes out thousands of men's sins, grants their prayers and bestows merit."

Besides this, work on Indian medicine also speak highly of this tree; its leaves, fruit and bark—all possess medicinal properties. They are made use of in treating ailments such as impurity of blood, excess of phlegm wind and bile, a burning sensation all over the body, vomitting, dropsy, want of appetite, poisoning, cough, remittent fever, hiccough a bruise in the heart, disease of the nose, dry spreading itches, worms, leprosy, a sore on the skin, a burn etc.

they are considered to be most handsome and attractive in appearance. The abode of the Gandharvas or Gandhavaloka is situated above the abode of the Guhyakas and below that of the Vidyādharas. Like the gods and the manes, there are two varieties of Gandharvas—earthly and celestial. A human being ascending to the abode of the Gandharvas by dint of his merits after death is an 'earthly' Gandharva; while he who is a Gandharva from the beginning of a Kalpa is called a celestial 'Gandharva'. The celestial Gandharvas are again divided into two classes—'Mauneyas' and 'Prādheyas'. Two of a sage Kaśyapa's wives bore the names of Muni and Pradhā respectively. Most of the Apsarās and Gandharvas took their birth from them. Sixteen celestial Gandharva, viz., Bhīmasena, Ugrasena, Suparṇa, Varuṇa, Gopati, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Sūryavarcā, Satyavāk, Arkaparṇa, Prayuta, Bhīma, Citraratha, Śāliśirā, Parjanya, Kali and Nārada, being the progeny of Muni, are called 'Mauneyas'. Another group of fourteen Gandharvas, viz., Siddha, Pūrṇa, Barhi, Pūrṇāyu, Brahmacārī, Ratiguṇa, Suparṇa, Viśvāvasu, Sucandra, Bhānu, Atibāhu, Hāhā, Hūhū and Tumburu, being born of Pradhā, are called 'Prādheyas' (*Mahābhārata, Ādi.*, LXV). Among them, Hāhā, Hūhū, Viśvāvasu, Tumburu, Citraratha and others are more prominent than the rest; and Citraratha is considered to be the ruler of them all. Citraratha is highly proficient in celestial music, and a master of this art. It is therefore, that the Lord calls him His very self. Accounts of these Gandharvas are contained in the *Agni, Mārkaṇḍeya, Vāyu* and *Kālikā Purāṇas,* the *Mahābhārata, Ādi-Parva* and other scriptures.

A 'Siddha' is one who has attained supernatural powers of all kinds obtaining of the physical and astral planes, and is fully endowed with noble virtues such as righteousness, wisdom, glory and dispassion etc. There are thousands of such Siddhas, Kapila being the foremost of them all. Lord Kapila is a direct manifestation of God. He took his descent from the womb of Devahūti, wife of the great Yogī Kardama, in order to impart divine knowledge to his mother. At the time of his birth the Creator, Brahmā himself, made his appearance in the hermitage of Kardama and said to Devahūti:—

"Held in high esteem by the teachers of Sāṅkhya, this lord of the Siddhas will enhance your glory and will be known throughout the world by the name of 'Kapila'.* (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* III.xxiv.19)

Kapila is eternally endowed by nature with virtues like knowledge, glory, righteousness and dispassion etc. There is none among the Siddhas who can even stand comparison with him, much less exeel him. It is therefore that the Lord calls sage Kapila His own self.

उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम्।
ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम्॥ २७॥

अश्वानाम् among horses; **अमृतोद्भवम्** (begotten of the churning of the ocean) along with nectar; **उच्चैःश्रवसम्** (the celestial horse named) Uccaiḥśravā; **गजेन्द्राणाम्** among mighty elephants; **ऐरावतम्** (the celestial elephant called) Airāvata; **च** and; **नराणाम्** among men; **नराधिपम्** the king; **माम्** Me; **विद्धि** know.

Among horses, know Me to be the celestial horse Uccaiḥśravā, begotten of the

---

* अयं सिद्धगणाधीशः सांख्याचार्यैः सुसम्मतः। लोके कपिल इत्याख्यां गन्ता ते कीर्तिवर्धनः॥

churning of the ocean along with nectar; among mighty elephants Airāvata (Indra's elephant); and among men, the king. (27)

The celestial horse Uccaiḥśravā, was got during the churning of the ocean along with nectar. Hence it is counted as one of the fourteen gems of the world and is regarded as the king of horses. It is therefore that the Lord calls Uccaiḥśravā His own self.

The leader of a herd of elephants is called 'Gajendra'. Among such Gajendras too the celestial elephant Airāvata, owned by Indra, is the best of all and is regarded as their chief. Like the horse Uccaiḥśravā, it was also got during the churning of the ocean. That is why the Lord declares it to be His own self.

A king devoted to his duty and adorned with virtues enumerated in the scriptures urges his subjects to righteous acts, deterring them from sinful pursuits, and protects them; hence he is regarded as superior to other men. Such kings exhibit the divine power more than ordinary man. It is therefore that the Lord calls him His own self.

The term 'Narādhipa' can also be taken to refer to the Manu presiding over a particular Manvantara, since he is the lord of men of that Manvantara. It is well-known that Prajāpati appointed Vaivasvata Manu as the Lord of men of the existing Manvantara.

मनुष्याणामधिपतिं चक्रे वैवस्वतं मनुम्।

(*Vāyu-Purāṇa* LXX.18)

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक्।
प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामस्मि वासुकिः ॥ २८ ॥

अहम् I; **आयुधानाम्** among weapons; **वज्रम्** the thunderbolt (the weapon of Indra); **धेनूनाम्** (while) among cows; **कामधुक्** the celestial cow named Kāmadhenu (the cow of plenty); **अस्मि** I am; **प्रजनः** followed by procreation; **कन्दर्पः** the sexual urge; **अस्मि** I am; **च** and; **सर्पाणाम्** among serpents; **वासुकिः** Vāsuki (the king of serpents); **अस्मि** am.

Among weapons, I am the thunderbolt; among cows, I am the celestial cow Kāmadhenu (the cow of plenty). I am the sexual desire which leads to procreation (as enjoined by the scriptures); among serpents, I am Vāsuki. (28)

Among all the weapons of the universe the thunderbolt (Indra's weapon) is the most powerful, because it embodies the glory of sage Dadhīci's austerities and the lustre of God Himself; and it is said to be unfailing in effect (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* VI.xi.19-20). Hence the Lord speaks of it as His very self.

The celestial cow Kāmadhenu (the cow of plenty) is the best of all cows. She can satisfy all the desires of gods and men and was got during the churning of the ocean. Hence the Lord declares her to be His own self.

'Kandarpa' is an appellation of the god of sexual love. By adding the qualification 'Prajana' to it, the Lord shows that only that sexual urge which leads to procreation as enjoined by the scriptures is identical with Him. The same idea was expressed in verse 11 of Chapter VII by adding the qualification 'Dharmāviruddhaḥ' (not inconsistent with virtue) to the word 'Kāmaḥ' (sexual desire). The intention is to show that sexual enjoyment indulged in by sensual men for the gratification of the sense is beastly and hardly consistent with virtue; only such enjoyment as is indulged in by men of self-control only for the sake

of procreation, and as enjoined by the scriptures, is consistent with virtue and therefore good. Hence it finds a place among the glories of God.

Vāsuki, being the king of serpents and a devotee of God, is regarded as the best of serpents. Hence the Lord declares him to be His own self.

अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम्।
पितॄणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम्॥२९॥

अहम् I; **नागानाम्** among the Nāgas (a special class of serpents); **अनन्तः** Ananta (the serpent-god); **च** and; **यादसाम्** (the lord) of aquatic creatures; **वरुणः** Varuṇa (the god of water); **अस्मि** am; **पितॄणाम्** among the manes; **अर्यमा** Aryamā (the head of the Pitṛs); **च** and; **संयमताम्** among rulers; **यमः** Yama (the god of death); **अहम्** I; **अस्मि** am.

Among Nāgas (a special class of serpents), I am the serpent-god Ananta; and I am Varuṇa, the lord of aquatic creatures. Among the manes, I am Aryamā (the head of the Pitṛs), and among rulers, I am Yama (the god of death). (29)

The serpent-god Śeṣa is the king of all Nāgas and is endowed with a thousand heads. Serving as a cosy bed for the Lord and rendering other services to Him, he is constantly engaged in gratifying Him. Besides he is a great devotee of the Lord, and often manifesting himself along with the Lord he participates in His divine sports. His birth also is attributed to God* Hence he is declared to be the Lord's own self.

Varuṇa, being the Lord of all aquatic creatures and deities presiding over the waters, the guardian of a quarter of the universe, a celestial being and a devotee of God, is held to be an outstanding personality. Hence the Lord speaks of him as His own self.

There are seven principal manes;† Kavyavāha, Anala, Soma, Yama, Aryamā, the Agniṣvāttas and the Barhiṣads. Aryamā, being the head of the Pitṛs, is recognized as the best of them all; therefore, the Lord speaks of him as His own self.

Among all the rulers on earth, as well as in the celestial world, Yama (the god of death) is the greatest. The awards of Yama are all equitable and righteous, salutary as well as expiatory in character. He is an enlightened devotee of God and the guardian of a quarter of the universe. Hence the Lord speaks of him as His own self.‡

---

* शेषं चाकल्पयद्देवमनन्तं विश्वरूपिणम्। यो धारयति भूतानि धरां चेमां सपर्वताम्॥

(*Mahā., Bhiṣma.,* LXVII.13)

"This supreme Deity brought forth the celestial Nāga, Ananta by name, who embodies in himself the whole creation and supports on his head the entire globe including the mountains as well as all living beings."

† कव्यवाहोऽनलः सोमो यमश्चैवार्यमा तथा। अग्निष्वात्ता बर्हिषदस्त्रयश्चान्त्या ह्यमूर्तयः॥

(*Śiva., Dharma.,* LXIII.2)

In some books we read the following names: Sukāla, Āngirasa, Susvadhā, Somapā, Vairāja, the Agniṣvāttas and the Barhiṣads (*Harivaṁśa,* Pūrva, XVIII). The names may have differed in the different Manvantaras.

‡ In the court of Yama no one is treated with partiality on any score, nor is there any scope for recommendation, bribery or flattery. His laws are inexorable. It is therefore that he is considered the greatest among rulers. Indra (the lord of paradise), Agni (the god of fire), Nirṛti (the goddess of death), Varuṇa (the god of water), Vāyu (the god of air), Kubera (the god of richés), Īśāna (Śiva) and

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम्।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम्॥ ३०॥

अहम् I; दैत्यानाम् among the Daityas; प्रह्लादः (the famous devotee) Prahlāda; च and; कलयताम् among reckoners; कालः Time; अस्मि am; च even so; मृगाणाम् among quadrupeds; मृगेन्द्रः the king of beasts, lion; च and; पक्षिणाम् among birds; अहम् I (am); वैनतेयः Garuḍa (son of Vinatā).

Among the Daityas, I am the great devotee Prahlāda; and among reckoners, I am Time. So among quadrupeds, I am the lion; and among birds, Garuḍa. **(30)**

The progeny of Diti are known as Daityas. Prahlāda has been recognized as the best of the Daityas inasmuch as he is endowed with all good qualities, an extremely pious soul, a faithful, loving and disinterested devotee of God, and the ruler of the Daityas. Hence the Lord speaks of him as His very self.

The word 'Kāla' denotes time with its various divisions, e.g., a moment, an hour, a day, a fortnight, a month, a year and so on. It is the basis of all astronomical calculations. Hence the Lord declares it to be identical with Himself.

The lion is recognized as the king of all beasts. It is the strongest, the boldest and the bravest of animals and has a most dignified bearing. Hence the Lord counts it among His glories.

Garuḍa, son of Vinatā, is the king of birds. Being the largest and most powerful of all birds, he is regarded as the best of them. Over and above this, he is a great devotee of God and the Lord's own carrier. Hence the Lord declares him to be His own self.

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम्।
झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी॥ ३१॥

Brahmā—these are the ten regional gods *(vide Bṛhaddharma-Purāṇa, Uttara., 9)*. They are the guardians of all the quarters of the universe.

It is said that to the virtuous Yama presents a naturally genial aspect; whereas to the sinners he appears in a dark and ghastly form with bloodshot eyes, terrible jaws, a tongue shooting like lightning, and dreadful bristling hair and with the rod of Punishment raised in his hand *(Skanda., Kāśī.*, Pūrvārdha, VIII.55,56).

Yama is possessed of supreme wisdom. It was he who imparted the knowledge of the Self to Naciketā. The story of Naciketā appears in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad, the Mahābhārata* Anuśāsana-Parva and the *Vārāha-Purāṇa*. Over and above this he is a great devotee of God. The glories of God, as well as of the Divine Name, sung by him before his messengers in *Śrīmada Bhāgavata VI.iii, Viṣṇu-Purāṇa III.vii,* and *Skanda-Purāṇa, Kāśī-Khaṇḍa, Pūrvārdha.* Ch. VIII, should be carefully studied by all without fail.

But occasionally there appear on earth men who bring even Yama to his wit's end. The *Skanda-Purāṇa* records the story of a famous emperor, Kīrtimān by name, who was a great devotee of God. Through his lofty teachings all his subjects were inspired with piety and devotion. By virtue of his religious merits, the souls that were already rotting in the abode of Yama gradually began to be redeemed; while those who were newly left their mortal coil attained the supreme state. Thus fresh entry into the abode of Yama was completely stopped. The result was that in due course not a single soul was left in his abode. Thereupon Yama lodged a complaint with Brahmā, who in his turn referred him to Bhagavān Viṣṇu. The latter told him that there was no help so long as the pious and devoted Emperor Kīrtimān ruled over the earth. But such a state of affairs could not last for ever; *(Skanda, Viṣṇu., Vai.*, XI.xii.13).

अहम् I; **पवताम्** among the purifiers; **पवनः** the wind; **शस्त्रभृताम्** (and) among wielders of weapons; **रामः** Śrī Rāma; **अस्मि** am; **झषाणाम्** among fishes; **मकरः** the shark; **अस्मि** am; **च** and; **स्रोतसाम्** among rivers; **जाह्नवी** the Ganges; **अस्मि** am.

Among purifiers, I am the wind; among warriors, I am Śrī Rāma. Among fishes, I am the shark; and among streams, I am the Ganges. (31)

Some commentators have interpreted the word 'Pavatām' to mean those possessed of swift motion, though such an interpretation is not supported by grammar. The wind has been regarded as the best even among those possessing speed as well as among purifiers. Hence the superiority of the wind is established from both the points of view.

The word 'Rāma' in this verse refers to Bhagavān Śrī Rāmacandra, son of king Daśaratha. By declaring His identity with Śrī Rāma, the Lord shows that it is He who assumes different forms for carrying on different kinds of sports in different ages. There is no difference between Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa; for it is He who appears in the form of Śrī Rāma.

Among fishes, the shark is the largest and most powerful. It is on account of this distinction that the Lord declares it to be Him own self.

The river Ganges or Bhāgīrathī, is the best of all rivers. Having its origin in the water which washed the feet of the Lord, it is held to be most sacred in character.* The Purāṇas and Itihāsas sing its glory in the highest terms.

Besides this, the story goes that on one occasion Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself melted and began to flow like water. Finding His way into the water-pot of Brahmā in that liquid form, He became known as the Ganges. Thus being no other than Brahma transformed into a liquid, the Ganges possesses infinite glory. Hence the Lord declares it to be His own self.†

---

* धातुः कमण्डलुजलं तदुरुक्रमस्य पादावनेजनपवित्रतया नरेन्द्र।
स्वर्धुन्यभून्नभसि सा पतती निमार्ष्टि लोकत्रयं भगवतो विशदेव कीर्तिः॥

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* VIII.xxi.4)

"O king, that water poured from the pot of Brahmā (the Creator), and hallowed by washing the feet of the Lord, turned to be heavenly counterpart of the holy Ganges (Mandākinī). Descending on earth from the heavens, like the spotless fame of the Lord, it continues to sanctify the three worlds to this day."

न ह्येतत्परमाश्चर्यं स्वर्धुन्या यदिहोदितम्। अनन्तचरणाम्भोजप्रसूताया भवच्छिदः॥
संनिवेश्य मनो यस्मिञ्छ्रद्धया मनुयोऽमलाः। त्रैगुण्यं दुस्त्यजं हित्वा सद्यो यातास्तदात्मताम्॥

(*Ibid.*, IX.ix.14-15)

"By firmly and devoutly fixing their unsullied mind on the lotus-feet of the Lord, sages have speedily attained identity with Him, renouncing the world, which is a product of the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti, so difficult to renounce. Hence what has been stated above in praise of the holy Ganges, which cuts asunder the bonds of earthly existence, and has proceeded from the same lotus feet of the Lord, is no cause for any great wonder."

† When the great goddess Satī, daughter of Dakṣa and Mother of the whole universe, dropped her body, and her consort, Bhagavān Śiva, embarked on a career of rigorous penance, the gods began to invoke the goddess, who revealed herself before them. The gods thereupon implored her to seek the hand of Lord Śiva once more. The goddess assured them that she would descend in two forms in the house of Himālaya, the king of mountains, from the womb of Menakā, daughter of Sumeru. Thereupon she first appeared as the Ganges. Offering praises to her, the gods took her to heaven. Assuming an embodied form, she thence repaired to the Kailāsa mountain with Bhagavān Śaṅkara, and at the request of Brahmā established herself in the water-pot of Brahmā in her formless

सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन।
अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम्॥ ३२॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; सर्गाणाम् of creation; आदिः the beginning; च and; मध्यम् the middle; च and; अन्तः the end; एव as well; अहम् I (am); अहम् I; विद्यानाम् of sciences; अध्यात्मविद्या the science of the soul or metaphysics; प्रवदताम् (and) in disputants; वादः the reasoning (adopted for determining the truth).

Arjuna, I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all creations. Of sciences, I am the science of the soul, or metaphysics; in disputants, I am the right type of reasoning. (32)

In verse 20 above the Lord declared Himself as the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings; and in the present verse He says that He is the beginning, the middle and the end of all creations. There is no tautology here; for whereas the word 'Bhūtānām' in verse 20 stands for sentient beings alone, the word 'Sargāṇām' in the present verse stands for the whole creation consisting of sentient and insentient beings and including all the worlds.

'Adhyātmavidyā' or Brahmavidyā is that branch of knowledge which deals with the Self, throws light on the Self and enables the soul to realize Brahma easily. All other branches of knowledge in the world, known as well as unknown, are inferior to Brahmavidyā; for they strengthen the bonds of ignorance rather than break them. Through Brahmavidyā, however, the knot of ignorance is untied for ever and the truth relating to God realized. Hence it is superior to all other branches of knowledge and that is why the Lord declares it to be His own self.

There are three forms of argumentation known by the names of 'Jalpa', 'Vitaṇḍā' and 'Vāda'. A disputation which is held with a view to establishing one's own viewpoint and for the demolition of the

---

aspect (अन्तर्धानांशभागेन स्थिता ब्रह्मकमण्डलौ). Brahmā carried her in that water-pot to Brahmaloka, his own abode. Thereafter, on one occasion, Bhagavān Śaṅkara paid a friendly visit to Vaikuṇṭha (the abode of Bhagavān Viṣṇu), accompanied by goddess Gaṅgā. There, at the request of Viṣṇu; Lord Śiva entertained Him with songs. Whatever tune he sang materialized before them. As Śaṅkara sang the tune technically known by the name of Śrī, the spirit of that tune also materialized. Enchanted by that melody, Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, who is Rasa (Bliss) personified, turned into a fluid and glided along. Thereupon Brahmā said to himself, "The melody that has emerged from Brahma (the eternal principle of sound) is Brahma Itself, and Bhagavān Śrī Hari, who is Brahma, embodied, has also melted on this occasion; let the Ganges, who is identical with Brahma, absorb this liquid Brahma." Reflecting thus, he brought his water-pot into contact with that flowing form of Nārāyaṇa. As soon as this was done, the whole of that liquid got mixed with the Ganges, and the formless Ganges now assumed the form of water. Brahmā then returned to his abode. Later on, when Bhagavān Viṣṇu, appearing as the Divine Dwarf, covered the entire heaven-world with one of His feet consisting of Sattva, Brahmā washed that foot with the water contained in his water-pot. At the touch of that water, the divine foot got rooted there, and even after the disappearance of Lord, the foot stayed along with the Ganges in heaven. The same Ganges, which emerged from that foot, was later brought down to earth by Bhagīratha, after great exertion in the shape of austere penance, for the deliverance of his ancestors. Here too it was Bhagavān Śaṅkara who bore her on his head. This wonderful, beautiful and instructive story dealing with the glory of the Ganges appear in the *Bṛhaddharma-Purāṇa. Madhya-Khaṇḍa*, Chapter 12 to 28.

adversary's standpoint irrespective of which is right and which is wrong, is called 'Jalpa'. That which is resorted to only for the demolition of the opponent's standpoint is known as 'Vitaṇḍā'; while reasoning with the pure motive of arriving at the right conclusion is known by the name of 'Vāda'. While 'Jalpa' and 'Vitaṇḍā' give rise to anger, hatred violence, pride and other evils, 'Vāda' is helpful in ascertaining the truth and attaining one's spiritual goal. So, while 'Jalpa' and 'Vitaṇḍā' are worth giving up, 'Vāda' is worth adopting wherever necessary. It is because of this merit possessed by 'Vāda' that the Lord declares it as one of His glories.

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च।
अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः॥ ३३॥

अक्षराणाम् among sounds represented by the alphabet; अकारः 'A' (the sound represented by the first letter of the alphabet); अस्मि I am; च and; सामासिकस्य of the different varieties of compounds in Saṁskṛt grammar; द्वन्द्वः (I am) the copulative compound; अहम् I (am); अक्षयः कालः the endless Time or the Devourer to Time itself; विश्वतोमुखः having one's face on all sides; धाता the sustainer (of all); अहम् एव I alone (am).

Among the sounds represented by the various letters, I am 'A' (the sound represented by the first letter of the alphabet); of the different kinds of compounds in grammar, I am the copulative compound. I am verily the endless Time (the devourer of Time, God); I am the sustainer of all, having My face on all sides. (33)

The sound represented by 'A' is the first of all vowels and consonants and it runs through the sounds represented by all other letters. The Śruti also says: "All speech is represented by the sound 'A'."* For these reasons the sound 'A' is the best of all other sounds. Hence the Lord declares it to be His own self.

The copulative compound is the best of all compounds, inasmuch as all its components carry equal emphasis.† Hence the Lord enumerates it as one of His glories.

The word 'Kāla' occurring in verse 30 denotes Time as understood in terms of its various divisions such as a Kalpa, Yuga, year, half-year, month, day, hour,

* अकारो वै सर्वा वाक्। *(Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, Pūrvārdha,* III.6)

† In Saṁskṛt grammar there are four varieties of compounds, viz., (1) Avyayībhāva, (2) Tatpuruṣa, (3) Bahuvrīhi, and (4) Dvandva. The other two compounds, Karmadhāraya and Dvigu, are covered by the Tatpuruṣa. In the Avyayībhāva compound, emphasis lies on the first word of the compound. For example, in the compound word 'Adhihari', meaning 'in Hari', the indeclinable 'Adhi' denotes the seventh case-ending; and this is what is sought to be conveyed by this compound. In the Tatpuruṣa compound, however, the emphasis lies on the second word. For example, of the two components of the compound word 'Sītāpati', the emphasis lies on 'Pati' (husband): for the whole expression signifies Śrī Rāma husband of Sītā. In the compound called 'Bahuvrīhi', the compounded whole signifies an object other than the meaning of the two components. For example, the compound word 'Pītāmbara' refers to the person wearing a yellow garment. Neither of the two components constituting this word, viz., 'Pīta' (yellow) and 'Ambara' (garment) carry emphasis individually; both of them taken together point to a third objects, viz., the Lord who wears a yellow robe. In the form of compound known as Dvandva (the copulative compound), however, all the components carry equal emphasis. For example, the compound word 'Rāmalakṣmaṇau' refers to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa both. Hence both the components forming this compound carry equal emphasis.

minute, second and so on. It is an evolute of Prakṛti and ceases to exist in what is known as the Mahāpralaya, or Final Dissolution. Therefore, it is not 'unending'. The 'Time' referred to in the present verse, however, is the same as the supreme Brahma or God Himself, who is constant, eternal and everlasting and without beginning or end. Hence the word has been qualified by the adjective 'endless' (Akṣayaḥ). Thus there is a world of difference between the 'Time' referred to in verse 30 and the 'Time' spoken of in the present verse. One is a product of Prakṛti, while the other is wholly beyond Prakṛti.*

Speaking of Himself as "the sustainer of all, having His face on all sides", the Lord brings out His identity with the Cosmic Form of God. The intention is to show that the all-formed and all-pervading God, the sustainer and nourisher of all, is the same as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and no other.

मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम्।
कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक्च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा॥ ३४॥

अहम् I am; सर्वहरः that snatches all; मृत्युः the Death; च and; भविष्यताम् of all that shall be; उद्भवः (I am) the origin; च even so; नारीणाम् among women; कीर्तिः glory; श्रीः prosperity; वाक् speech; स्मृतिः memory; मेधा intelligence; धृतिः steadfastness; च and; क्षमा forbearance.

I am the all-destroying Death that snatches all, and the origin of all that shall be born. Among women, I am Kīrti, Śrī, Vāk, Smṛti, Medhā, Dhṛti and Kṣamā (the goddesses presiding over glory, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, steadfastness and forbearance respectively). (34)

It is God Himself who appears as Death to destroy all. That is why He speaks of Death as His very self in the present verse. He has already stated in verse IX.19 that He is Death and Immortality both.

Even as God appearing as Death destroys all living beings, *i.e.,* disunites them from their body, so does He unite them with other bodies and thus causes their birth. This is what is meant when the Lord declares Himself to be the origin of all that are to be born.

Prasūti, daughter of Svāyambhuva Manu, was married with Dakṣa Prajāpati and gave birth to twentyfour daughters. Kīrti, Medhā, Dhṛti, Smṛti, and Kṣamā are included in them. Of these, Kīrti, Medhā and Dhṛti were given in marriage to Dharma; Smṛti

* There are three varieties of Kāla:—

(1) 'Kāla' in the sense of Time.

(2) 'Kāla' in the form of Prakṛti. The period immediately following the Mahāpralaya; of Final Dissolution, during which Prakṛti exists in a state of equillibrium, is Time in the form of Prakṛti.

(3) The eternal and everlasting God Himself, the embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss.

Higher and subtler than 'Kāla' in the gross form of Time is 'Kāla' in the form of Prakṛti, which is incomprehensible to the intellect; whereas 'Kāla' in the shape of God is even subtler and higher than, and far superior to, Kāla in the form of Prakṛti. Really speaking, God is wholly beyond time and space; but where we speak of Prakṛti and its evolute, the world of matter, God alone, who is all Knowledge and all Bliss, and who is the source, substratum and inspirer of all, is the real 'Kāla'. It is He who is referred to here as the 'endless Time'.

was married to Aṅgirā, and Kṣamā to sage Pulaha. Śrī is a daughter of Bhṛgu, born of Dakṣa's daughter 'Khyāti'; her hand was espoused by Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa. And 'Vāk' is an offspring of Brahmā. All these seven are deities presiding over the seven virtues indicated by their names, *viz.*, glory, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, steadfastness and forbearance, and are recognized as the best among women. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of them as His glories.

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम्।
मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः॥ ३५॥

तथा likewise; **साम्नाम्** among all the Śrutis that can be sung; **अहम्** I (am); **बृहत्साम** the class of Śrutis known as Bṛhatsāma; **छन्दसाम्** (while) among the Vedic hymns; **गायत्री** (I am) the metre known as Gāyatrī; **मासानाम्** among the twelve months (of the Hindu calendar); **मार्गशीर्षः** (I am) the month known as Mārgaśīrṣa (corresponding approximately to November); **ऋतूनाम्** (and) among the six seasons (successively appearing in India in course of a year); **कुसुमाकरः** the vernal season (*lit.*, the season of flowers); **अहम्** I (am).

Likewise among the Śrutis that can be sung, I am the variety known as Bṛhatsāma; while among the Vedic hymns, I am the hymn known as Gāyatrī. Again, among the twelve months of the Hindu calendar; I am the month known as 'Mārgaśīrṣa' (corresponding approximately to November); (and) among the six seasons (successively appearing in India in course of a year) I am the vernal season. **(35)**

Among the different varieties (Rathantara etc.) of hymns appearing in the Sāmaveda, the variety known as Bṛhatsāma* is the most prominent and therefore the best. Hence the Lord speaks of it as His very self.

The Gāyatrī is the most important of all the hymns or metrical compositions comprised in the Vedas. The glory of the Gāyatrī is scattered through the entire body of sacred literature consisting of the Vedas, Smṛti-texts, Itihāsas and Purāṇas.† It is due to this excellence of the Gāyatrī that the Lord speaks of it as His very self.

In the days of the *Mahābhārata*, the

* Bṛhatsāma is a special variety of psalms finding place in the Sāmaveda and devoted to the praises of God under the name of Indra. There psalms are sung towards the end of the sacrifice known by the name of Atirātra.

† The following extracts form the scriptures will throw light on the glory of the Gāyatrī:—

गायत्री छन्दसां मातेति। (*Nārāyaṇopaniṣad*, 34)

"Gāyatrī is the mother of all the Vedas."

सर्ववेदसारभूता गायत्र्यास्तु समर्चना। ब्रह्मादयोऽपि संध्यायां तां ध्यायन्ति जपन्ति च॥

(*Devī-Bhāgavata* XI.xvi.15)

"Worship of the Gāyatrī constitutes the essence of all the Vedas. Even gods like Brahmā meditate on and repeat the Gāyatrī every morning and evening."

गायत्र्युपासना नित्या सर्ववेदैः समीरिता। यया विना त्वधःपातो ब्राह्मणस्यास्ति सर्वथा॥

(*Ibid.*, XII.viii.89)

"All the Vedas declare worship of the Gāyatrī as an obligatory duty (for those invested with the sacred thread). Neglect of this brings about the downfall of the Brāhmaṇa in every way."

year used to begin with the month of Mārgaśīrṣa (*Mahā., Anu.*, Ch. 106 and 109). Hence it is the first of the twelve months. Besides, the scriptures promise great rewards to those who observe sacred vows and fasts* in this month. The offering of the newly harvested crop to the sacred fire has been recommended in this very month. The *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki speaks of this month as the ornament of the year. Thus the month of Mārgaśīrṣa is superior to all months of the year in many respects. Hence the Lord declares it to be His very self.

The spring is the best of all seasons and has been recognized as their queen. During this season the whole plant kingdom wears a sprightly appearance and is clothed in fresh leaves and flowers even without water. The weather in this season is neither too hot nor too cold, and almost all creatures feel cheerful and happy. That is why the Lord declares it to be His own self.

द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम्।
जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम्॥ ३६ ॥

अहम् I; छलयताम् among all deceitful practices; द्यूतम् gambling; तेजस्विनाम् (and) of the glorious; तेजः glory; अस्मि am; अहम् I; जयः the victory (of the victorious); अस्मि am; व्यवसायः the resolve (of the resolute); सत्त्ववताम् (and) of the good; सत्त्वम् goodness; अस्मि am.

I am gambling among deceitful practices, and the glory of the glorious. I am the victory of the victorious, the resolve of the resolute, the goodness of the good. (36)

God is present in all living beings and objects, good, bad or middling, existing in this world. It is His presence and inspiration that lend activity to the whole creation. There is hardly any substance which is devoid of the presence or power of God.

अभीष्टं लोकमाप्नोति प्राप्नुयात् काममीप्सितम्। गायत्री वेदजननी गायत्री पापनाशिनी॥
गायत्र्याः परमं नास्ति दिवि चेह च पावनम्। हस्तत्राणप्रदा देवी पततां नरकार्णवे॥

(*Śaṅkhasmṛti*, XII.24-25)

"A member of the twice-born classes performing the worship of the Gāyatrī attains the world of his seeking and the enjoyments craved for him. Gāyatrī is the mother of all the Vedas and the destroyer of all sins. There is nothing more purifying than the Gāyatrī either in heaven or on earth. Goddess Gāyatrī rescues those who are going to fall in the ocean of hell by holding out her hand to them."

गायत्र्यास्तु परं नास्ति शोधनं पापकर्मणाम्। महाव्याहृतिसंयुक्तां प्रणवेन च संजपेत्॥

(*Saṁvartasmṛti*, 218)

"Nothing is more efficacious than the Gāyatrī in expiating one's sins. One should repeat the sacred Gāyatrī-Mantra along with Praṇava (the syllable OM) and the three mystic words (Vyāhṛtis)."

नास्ति गङ्गासमं तीर्थं न देवः केशवात् परः। गायत्र्यास्तु परं जप्यं न भूतं न भविष्यति॥

(*Bṛh., Yogī-Yājñavalkya*, X.10)

"There is no holy place equal in sanctity to the Ganges, and no deity superior to Bhagavān Viṣṇu. And there has neither been; nor will there be, any mystic formula greater than the Gāyatrī.

* शुक्ले मार्गशिरे पक्षे योषिद्भर्तुरनुज्ञया। आरभेत व्रतमिदं सार्वकामिकमादितः॥

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* VI.xix.12)

"In the bright fortnight of the Mārgaśīrṣa, for the first time, a woman should undertake, with the permission of her husband, this sacred vow of 'Puṁsavana', which fulfils all desires".

Of all such beings and objects exhibiting the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika qualities, only that being or object which is possessed of some extraordinary virtue, exceptional glory and special attraction exhibits the presence and power of God in a special degree. It is from this point of view that the Lord has briefly mentioned in this connection even abstract ideas and virtues like victory, resolution, glory, righteousness and knowledge along with sentient beings like gods, demons, men, beasts, birds and serpents etc., and inanimate objects like the thunderbolt, senses, mind and ocean. It is for brevity's sake that the Lord has mentioned only the main categories or groups. The intention is to show that whatever being, object, action or concept may be thought of, He alone should be contemplated in that form. It is from this point of view, and not with the object of extolling gambling and encouraging people to practise it, that of all deceitful practices the Lord declares it to be His own self.

In this connection it should be remembered that the Lord speaks of the most ferocious and bloodthirsty lion and shark as well as the all-consuming fire and all-devouring Death as His very self. This does not mean that anybody should take into his head to play with a lion or a shark, jump into fire or deliberately enter the jaws of death. The objection that lies in adopting these courses of action holds good in the case of gambling as well.

Glory, victory, resolution and goodness—all these virtues and achievements are helpful in God-realization; hence the Lord declares them as His own self. This declaration is further intended to show that the glory of the glorious really belongs to Him. He who prides himself on it as a manifestation of his own power commits a blunder. Even so all such virtues and achievements as the victory of the victorious, the resolution of the resolute and the goodness of the good are also His. Priding oneself on these also constitutes the height of folly.* Besides the above idea the statement also indicates that those who are blessed with these virtues should be regarded as noble inasmuch as the divine glory is manifested in them in a special degree.

---

* There is a story in the *Kenopaniṣad* which runs as under. Once upon a time the gods of heaven scored a victory over the demons through the grace of God. The fame and glory of the gods filled all quarters. Intoxicated by their triumph, the gods turned their face from God and said to each other: "The victory is, indeed ours. We have vanquished the demons by dint of our own valour and shrewdness. It is for this reason that the world worships us and sings songs commemorating our victory." In order to do a good turn to the gods by humbling their pride the Supreme Being or Brahma sportively manifested such a wonderful form, the very sight of which puzzled the mind of the gods. In order to discover the identity of that wonderful Being in the form of a Yakṣa or demigod, the gods approached their leader, the god of fire, and said to him, "O god of fire, you are the most glorious of all of us. Please go and ascertain who this Yakṣa really is." The god of fire gave his assent and assured them of the success of his mission. He then approached the Yakṣa, but was so overpowered by his brilliance that he had no courage even to speak. At last the divine Yakṣa accosted the god of fire and asked him who he was. The god of fire replied, "My name is widely known. They call me both by the name of Agni and Jātavedā." "This is all right;" rejoined the Supreme Being, "but O god of fire, tell Me what prowess you possess and what you are capable of". "O Yakṣa !" the god of fire retorted, "I can reduce to ashes whatever exists on earth or in the intermediate region, animate or inanimate."

Throwing a dry blade of grass before the god of fire, the Supreme Being asked him to burn it. The god of fire exerted all his strength, and tried every means to burn it, but failed to do so. Hanging down his head in shame and without saying a word more to the Yakṣa, he returned to the gods with a sense of frustration writ large on his face and reported that he had failed to discover the identity of the Yakṣa.

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः।
मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः॥ ३७॥

वृष्णीनाम् among the members of the Vṛṣṇi clan of Kṣatriyas; वासुदेवः Śrī Kṛṣṇa (son of Vasudeva); पाण्डवानाम् of the sons of Pāṇḍu (viz. Yudhiṣṭhira and others); धनञ्जयः Arjuna (lit., a conqueror of riches); मुनीनाम् among the sages; व्यासः the great sage Vedavyāsa; कवीनाम् among the wise; उशना कविः the wise Śukrācārya (the famous preceptor of the demon kings); अपि too; अहम् I; अस्मि am.

I am Kṛṣṇa among the Vṛṣṇis, Arjuna among the sons of Pāṇḍu, Vyāsa among the sages, and the sage Śukrācārya among the wise. (37)

By calling Vāsudeva His own self, the Lord establishes identity between a manifestation of God and God himself. The intention is to show that it is the integral Brahma or the Supreme Person, the unborn, immortal and almighty Overlord of all created beings, who manifested Himself as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva (IV.6). Therefore, he who regards the Lord as an ordinary human being commits an egregious blunder.

Even though Yudhiṣṭhira was the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, a highly virtuous soul and a great devotee of God, yet it is Arjuna who is recognized as the greatest of the Pāṇḍavas. The reason for this is that when the Lord appeared as the sage Nārāyaṇa, Arjuna was present with Him in the form of Nara. Over and above this, he was the dearest friend

Now it was the turn of the wind-god to approach the Yakṣa; but he too had the same experience as the god of fire and could not utter a single word. On the Yakṣa enquiring who he was, the wind-god replied, "I am wind personified; my name and virtues are widely known. I constantly blow and carry smell from one place to another. As I move in the intermediate region I am also called by the name of Mātariśvā". The Supreme Being asked him what he was capable of. The wind-god replied that he could blow away all that existed on earth or in the intermediate region. Throwing the same dry blade of grass before him, the Supreme Being asked him to blow it away. Exerting all his strength, the wind-god failed even to move the blade of grass. Feeling much ashamed at this, he returned forthwith to the gods and reported that he had failed to make out who the Yakṣa was.

Indra, the Lord of paradise, was the next to approach the Yakṣa. Finding him full of pride and egotism, Brahma in the form of the Yakṣa disappeared from the scene. In order to crush Indra's pride, He did not even condescend to speak to him. Though much abashed at this initial rebuff, Indra did not lose heart and started meditation on God. Presently he noticed in the sky goddess Umā, daughter of Himavān (the deity presiding over the Himālayas) standing before him in all her splendour and adorned with the best of ornaments of all kinds. Indra was delighted to see goddess Pārvatī and thought that since she constantly lived with Bhagavān Śiva, the embodiment of Knowledge, she must be aware who the Yakṣa was. Therefore, approaching her with great humility, he asked her to disclose the identity of the Yakṣa who having revealed himself before him had forthwith disappeared. Umā replied, "the Yakṣa was no other than Brahma. It was Brahma who vanquished the demons. You were merely His instruments. Your glory increased because of this victory of Brahma. It was His victory that had enhanced your glory and made you objects of worship. It is your vanity that make you feel triumphant and glorified. Give up this false pride and know that whatever happens is attributable to Him."

This revelation made by Umā opened the eyes of Indra and humbled his pride. Awakened to a sense of the power of Brahma, Indra returned to his abode in heaven and imparted the knowledge of Brahma to the gods of fire and wind as well. Thus these two gods also came to know Brahma. It was this knwledge of Brahma which gave these three precedence over all other gods. Of these three, again, Indra occupies the highest place, because he was the first to know Brahma.

and a great lover of the Lord. That is why the Lord declares him to be His very self.*

A 'Muni' is one who meditates on God and makes a deep study of the Vedas and other scriptures. Bhagavān Vedavyāsa divided the Vedas after thoroughly examining them, and is the author of the *Mahābhārata*, the various Purāṇas and many other scriptures. He is a part manifestation of God, and a repository of all noble virtues. Being thus the foremost of all sages, Vyāsa has been declared by the lord as the same as Himself.

The word 'Kaviḥ' stands for a learned and wise man. The great Śukrācārya is the lord of the Bhārgavas (sons of Bhṛgu), an adept in all branches of learning, and in the science of reviving the dead, and the foremost of the wise. Hence he has been declared to be the very self of the Lord.†

दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम्।
मौनं चैवास्मि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम्॥ ३८॥

अहम् I; दमयताम् in rulers; दण्डः the ruling power; अस्मि am; जिगीषताम् in those who seek to conquer; नीतिः righteousness; अस्मि am; गुह्यानाम् (the custodian) of secrets; मौनम् reticence; अस्मि am; च and; ज्ञानवताम् of the wise; ज्ञानम् the wisdom; एव too (am I).

I am the subduing power in rulers; I am righteousness in those who seek to conquer. Of things to be kept secret, I am the custodian in the shape of reticence; and I am the wisdom of the wise. (38)

Deterring the unrighteous and unruly element from sinful conduct, the fear of punishment urges them to right action. It is through self-restraint that the mind and senses of man are controlled and help him in God-realization. It is through fear of punishment that all living beings perform their respective functions. Hence the authority possessed by gods, kings and rulers who rule according to law has been declared by the

* The Lord Himself says in the *Mahābhārata:—*

नरस्त्वमसि दुर्द्धर्ष हरिर्नारायणो ह्यहम्। काले लोकमिमं प्राप्तौ नरनारायणावृषी॥
अनन्यः पार्थ मत्तस्त्वं त्वत्तश्चाहं तथैव च। नावयोरन्तरं शक्यं वेदितुं भरतर्षभ॥

(*Mahā., Vana.,* XII.46-47)

"O unconquerable Arjuna ! you are the divine Nara and I am God Nārāyaṇa Himself. At one time both of us came down to earth in the form of the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa. Therefore, O Arjuna, you are none other than Myself, and I am no other than you. O best of the Bharatas ! no one can discriminate between you and Me."

† Among the seven sons, Cyavana and others, of the great sage Bhṛgu, Śukra is the principal figure. Through the worship of God Śaṅkara, he obtained knowledge of the science of reviving the dead and a body free from death and old age and as strong as adamant. It was through the grace of God Śaṅkara, again, that he acquired proficiency in the science of Yoga and attained the position of a teacher of Yoga. He is the family priest of the demons. His other names are Kāvya, Kavi and Uśanā. He married the mind-born daughter of the manes, known by the name of Go. Ṣaṇḍa and Amarka, the celebrated teachers of the Prahlāda, were the sons of Śukra. A master of many secret and rare Mantras, proficient in many sciences and exceptionally wise, Śukra is a great adept in politics. His monumental work on political science, known by the name of 'Śukranīti' is widely known. It was from him that Kaca, the son of Bṛhaspati, learnt the science of revival of the dead. Many wonderful and instructive stories connected with Śukra appear in the *Mahābhārata*, as well as in the Bhāgavata, Vāyu, Brahma, Matsya and Skanda Purāṇas and other works.

Lord to be the same as Himself.

The word 'Nīti', in this verse, stands for righteousness. It is righteousness alone which brings one true victory. A Government which abandons righteousness, and follows the path of unrighteousness, is doomed. Therefore, righteousness, is the best means for the attainment of victory. Hence the Lord declares righteousness to be the same as Himself.

Secrets can be maintained only through reticence. Without restraint over speech, it is exceptionally difficult to preserve a secret. Reticence being thus the best custodian of secrets, the Lord speaks of it as His own self.

The word 'Jñānavatām' stands for those truly wise men who have realized the supreme Brahma or God. Their knowledge alone is the best of all knowledge. Hence the Lord declares such knowledge to be His own self. In verse 17 of Chapter XIII too the Lord likewise declares Himself to be the same as Knowledge.

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम्॥ ३९॥

च and; अर्जुन O Arjuna; यत् which; सर्वभूतानाम् of all beings; बीजम् (is) the seed; तत् अपि that too; अहम् I (am); तत् such; चराचरम् भूतम् any being, moving or inert; न अस्ति there is not; यत् which; मया विना without Me; स्यात् may exist.

Arjuna, I am even that which is the seed of all life. For there is no creature, moving or inert, which exists without Me. (39)

God alone is the ultimate support and substratum of the whole of this animate and inanimate creation; it is from Him that everything originates. Hence He alone is the seed or ultimate cause of all. It is for this reason that in VII.10 He has been declared as the "eternal seed" of all beings, and in IX.18 as the "imperishable seed". Hence, in the present verse, He proclaims His identity with the seed of all beings.

By the latter half of this verse the Lord reveals His omnipresence and His identity with all. That is to say, all creatures, animate or inanimate, are pervaded by Him, and there is no creature whatsoever which is devoid of His presence. Therefore, regarding all beings as identical with God, and knowing them as pervaded by Him, one should think of God alone in the form of whatever presents itself before his mind. This concludes the reply to Arjuna's question contained in X.17, viz., in what particular forms He should be meditated upon by him.

In verse 19 the Lord stated that there was no end to His divine glories, and therefore undertook to enumerate only His conspicuous glories. Accordingly, from verse 20 to 39, He described those glories. Now He winds up the topic revealing once more the infinite variety of His divine glories.

नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परन्तप।
एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया॥ ४०॥

परन्तप O vanquisher of foes, Arjuna; मम My; दिव्यानाम् विभूतीनाम् to divine manifestations; अन्तः limit; न अस्ति there is not; मया by Me; विभूतेः of (My) glory; एषः this; विस्तरः extent;

तु however; उद्देशतः in brief; प्रोक्तः has been described.

Arjuna, there is no limit to My divine manifestations. This is only a brief description by Me of the extent of My glory. (40)

By the first half of this verse the Lord indicates that even His divine glories are unlimited, much more His ordinary glories. Even as the particles of water and earth cannot be counted, so it is impossible to count His glories. They are so numerous that they can neither be known nor described by anyone. His glories are endless in the countless universes, and none can ever expect to find their limit.

By the second half of the verse the Lord intends to convey that the extent of His divine glories described in this chapter represents only a small fraction of them and that their full description is very difficult. Hence He concludes the discussion of those glories.

In verse 18 Arjuna requested the Lord to describe His glories and His power of Yoga. Having described them accordingly, He now briefly describes His power of Yoga.

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसम्भवम्॥ ४१॥

यत् यत् whatever; एव indeed; विभूतिमत् glorious; श्रीमत् brilliant; वा and; ऊर्जितम् powerful; सत्त्वम् being; तत् तत् एव that very; त्वम् you; मम तेजोंऽशसम्भवम् a part manifestation of My effulgence; अवगच्छ know.

Every such being as is glorious, brilliant and powerful, know that to be a part manifestation of My glory. (41)

The word 'Sattvam', qualified by the adjectives 'Vibhūtimat', 'Śrīmat' and 'Ūrjitam' covers all living beings or inanimate objects that are possessed of virtues like glory, elegance and comeliness etc., and endowed with strength, energy, valour or any other power. And regarding every living being or object endowed with all or even one of those qualities as a fraction of the divine glory is what is meant by knowing it as a part manifestation of the divine effulgence.

The electric current gives us light, turns our fans, draws water for us and works our radio machine and performs many other functions at various places. It is, however, a settled fact that wherever any such activity takes place, it is all due to the electrical power; in fact, it is a manifestation of a fraction of the electric current. Even so, whatever speciality we observe in a particular living being or object should be regarded as a part manifestation of the divine glory.

Having thus referred to the manifestation of a fraction of His glory or Yogic power in all principal objects and beings, the Lord now reveals that He holds the entire universe by a mere fraction of His Yogic power.

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्॥ ४२॥

अथवा or; अर्जुन O Arjuna; एतेन बहुना ज्ञातेन by knowing all this in detail; तव किम् what will you gain; अहम् I; इदम् this; कृत्स्नम् entire; जगत् universe; एकांशेन by a fraction (of My Yogic power); विष्टभ्य holding; स्थितः stand.

Or, what will you gain by knowing all this in detail, Arjuna? Suffice it to say that I stand holding this entire universe by a fraction of My Yogic power. (42)

The indeclinable 'Athavā' introduces an alternative suggestion or something different from what has been stated above. It is intended to convey that the Lord is now going to say something different from, and more remarkable than, what has already been confided to him, viz., a description of His outstanding glories as contained in verses 20 to 39 and of the various media of His manifestation enumerated in verse 41.

Although at the request of Arjuna the Lord described His conspicuous glories in the foregoing verses, it is not all that he should know. The most important thing is that which He is now going to reveal, and which Arjuna is now called upon to grasp thoroughly. Everything else will then be automatically clear to him, and nothing more will remain still to be known by him.

The word 'Jagat', qualified by the adjectives 'Idam' and 'Kṛtsnam', stands for the entire universe consisting of the different worlds and all animate and inanimate beings inhabiting them with their mind, senses and body, objects and places of enjoyment etc. That the Lord holds countless such universes in a fragment of His being through His own Yogic power is what is sought to be conveyed by the latter half of this verse.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विभूतियोगो
नाम दशमोऽध्यायः॥ १०॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the tenth chapter entitled "The Yoga of Divine Glories".

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter XI

At the request of Arjuna, the Lord reveals to him His Cosmic Body in this chapter.

Title of the Chapter

A major part of the chapter is solely devoted to a description of the Cosmic Body and praises offered by Arjuna to the Lord manifested in that form; hence it has been given the title of "The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Body."

Verses 1 to 4 of this chapter contain tributes of praise to the Lord and His teaching, and Arjuna's prayer for a vision of His Cosmic Body, From the fifth to the eighth He

Summary of the Chapter

calls upon Arjuna to behold in His body the whole universe consisting of gods, men, beasts, birds and all other animate and inanimate beings with many wonderful sights never seen before, and finally offers to vouchsafe the divine eye to him. Reporting the revelation by the Lord of His Cosmic Body to Arjuna in the ninth, Sañjaya describes from the tenth to the thirteenth the form as seen by Arjuna. The fourteenth describes how Arjuna bowed to the Lord with reverence, full of wonder and joy at the sight of that form. From the fifteenth to the thirtyfirst, Arjuna offers praises to the Cosmic Body and describes what he beheld in that form, and finally requests the Lord to reveal His identity to him. From the thirty-second to the thirtyfourth the Lord declares Himself as Kāla, the destroyer of the worlds, and Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all other brave warriors as already killed by Him, and finally encourages and enjoins Arjuna to fight. Thereafter, verses 35 to 46 describe how Arjuna, wonderstruck and terrified at the words of the Lord, offers his praises and obeisance to Him and begging His forgiveness prays Him to reveal His four-armed divine form. Revealing the glory and rarity of His Cosmic Body in the fortyseventh and fortyeighth the Lord consoles Arjuna in the fortyninth and directs him to behold the four-armed divine form. In the fiftieth, Sañjaya describes how the Lord first revealed the four-armed form, and then resumed the human semblance. In the fiftyfirst, Arjuna tells the Lord how he was composed and returned to his normal state at the sight of the Lord's delightful human form. Thereafter, pointing out in the fiftysecond and fiftythird the rarity of the vision of His four-armed Divine Form, the Lord declares in the fifty-fourth that the same can be easily seen, known and entered into through single-minded devotion. The chapter is concluded after revealing in the fiftyfifth the true nature and reward of exclusive devotion.

Link of the Discourse

Having briefly described His glory and power of Yoga and the value of knowing them in the first seven verses of Chapter X, the Lord devoted verses 8 to 11 of that chapter to a discussion of Bhaktiyoga (the path of Devotion) and its fruit. Thereupon, from the twelfth to the eighteenth, Arjuna extolled the Lord and requested Him to describe in detail His divine glories and

power of Yoga. Then, having described His glories up to the fortieth, the Lord finally revealed the glory of His power of Yoga and concluded the chapter by declaring that the entire universe is held in a mere fraction of His Being. This last statement aroused in Arjuna's mind the desire to obtain a direct vision of that infinite being of the Lord (a fraction of which holds the entire universe). Therefore, extolling the Lord and His teaching in the first four verses of this chapter, Arjuna requests Him to vouchsafe a direct vision of the Cosmic Body.

अर्जुन उवाच

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसञ्ज्ञितम्।
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम॥ १॥

मदनुग्रहाय out of kindness to me; त्वया by You; यत् which; परमम् गुह्यम् most profound; अध्यात्मसञ्ज्ञितम् वचः word of spiritual wisdom; उक्तम् has been spoken; तेन thanks to that; मम my; अयम् this; मोहः ignorance; विगतः has entirely disappeared.

Arjuna said: Thanks to the most profound words of spiritual wisdom that You have spoken out of kindness to me, this delusion of mine has entirely disappeared. (1)

Arjuna's heart was filled with joy, love and gratitude when he heard the divine glory of the Lord, who is an ocean of love, revealed by Him in the beginning of Chapter X with the remark that he was confiding all that to him out of solicitude for him knowing his intense love for Him. Arjuna thought how kind it was of the Lord, who is the supreme Ruler of all the worlds, to acknowledge an insignificant creature like him as his lover and go on openly revealing to him the closely guarded secrets of His own glory. He now remembered the words of the sages, and singing His praises with utmost faith, he renewed his loving prayer to the Lord for a detailed description of His power of Yoga and glories. The Lord responded to his prayer and gave him a brief description of His glories and Yoga. Arjuna's heart now bore the stamp of divine grace on it. He was beside himself with joy at this unusual exhibition of divine grace on him.

The supreme benefit or divine grace is practically denied to the Sādhaka so long as he remains conscious of his own effort, spiritual practice or capacity. He cannot easily climb to the higher rungs of spiritual ladder without the help of the divine grace. When, however, through the grace of God Himself he comes to recognize the divine grace, and when he perceives as if with his own eyes that whatever is happening is happening through the grace of God, he is filled with gratitude and exclaims from the bottom of his heart, "O Lord, I am worth nothing at all, and am wholly unqualified. All this is an exhibition of Your grace alone." With a heart full of gratitude, Arjuna likewise says in this verse, "Lord, I am hardly qualified to hear all that You have said about Your own power and glory. It is out of sheer kindness that You have revealed this closely guarded secret of Yours to me." That is the implication of the word 'Madanugrahāya', used in this verse.

The word 'Vacaḥ' qualified by the adjectives 'Paramaṁ', 'Guhyaṁ' and 'Adhyātmasaṁjñitam', covers the supreme words of wisdom referred to in X.1 and acutally contained in verses 2 to 11, the

subsequent description of His glories and power of Yoga given in verses 20 to 42 in response to Arjuna's further query, and lastly the exposition of the truth and inner meaning of His virtues, glory, power and identity embodied in Chapters VII to IX under the name of 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' that is, Knowledge of both Nirguṇa Brahma and qualified Divinity. In the course of these teachings, the Lord has fully revealed His identity. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the adjectives 'Paramam' 'Guhyam' and 'Adhyātma-saṁjñitam' with the noun 'Vacaḥ' in the present verse.

The Lord has Himself characterized as most secret all those teachings in which he has dealt with His own reality, virtues and glory and exhorted Arjuna to take refuge in Him, and in which he has plainly told Arjuna that his friend Śrī Kṛṣṇa standing before him was no other than the Almighty God Himself, the creator and destroyer of the whole universe, who represents both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects and is both embodied and disembodied, who lies entirely beyond Māyā, and is the substratum and support of all.

Arjuna's delusion or ignorance consisted in his lack of full knowledge of the virtues, glory, power and being of God. Through the above teachings of the Lord he has now partially realized these virtues, glory, power, mystery and reality of God and come to know that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is God Himself. This is what is meant by his disillusionment.

भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया।
त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम्॥ २॥

हि because; कमलपत्राक्ष O lotus-eyed Lord; मया by me; त्वत्तः from You; भूतानाम् of beings; भवाप्ययौ (an account of) the evolution and dissolution; विस्तरशः in detail; श्रुतौ have been heard; च and; अव्ययम् महात्म्यम् (Your) immortal glory; अपि also.

For, Kṛṣṇa, I have heard from You in detail an account of the evolution and dissolution of beings, and also Your immortal glory. (2)

It is from God that all animate and inanimate beings emanate; it is by Him that they are maintained and into Him that they all enter. Arjuna has repeatedly heard this in detail from the lips of the Lord in Chapters VII to X. This is what he means by the first half of this verse.

Though creating, maintaining and destroying the whole universe, God is in reality a non-doer; though controlling all, He is altogether unconcerned; though all-pervasive, He remains wholly untouched by the virtues and vices of things; though dispensing the fruits of good and evil deeds in the shape of joys and sorrows. He is free from the faults of cruelty and discrimination; and manifested in the forms of Prakṛti (Matter), Kāla (Time) and all regional gods, He is the almighty Ruler of all. This is the immortal glory of the Lord referred to in the latter half of the verse.

एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर।
द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम॥ ३॥

परमेश्वर O Supreme Lord; त्वम् you; आत्मानम् Yourself; यथा what; आत्थ declare to be;

एतत् this (is); एवम् so; पुरुषोत्तम O Supreme Person; ते Your; ऐश्वरम् divine *(i.e.,* possessed of wisdom, glory, energy, strength, valour and effulgence); रूपम् form; द्रष्टुम् to perceive (with my own eyes); इच्छामि I long.

Lord, You are precisely what You declare Yourself to be. But I long to see Your divine form (possessed of wisdom, glory, energy, strength, valour and effulgence), O best of persons ! (3)

By addressing the Lord as 'Parameśvara. Arjuna seeks to convey that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the supreme Lord of the entire creation, and thus capable of doing everything. He could, therefore, easily reveal to Arjuna the divine form which he longed to see. Again, by addressing Him as 'Puruṣottama' he shows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Person, beyond both the perishable and the imperishable. Arjuna, accordingly hoped that He would condescend to fulfil his desire for a vision of the divine form.

Whatever has been spoken by the Lord about Himself in the course of the description of His virtues, glory, reality and divine powers is wholly true; Arjuna had not the least doubt about it. This is what he means by the first half of this verse.

The word 'Rūpam', qualified by the adjective 'Aiśvaram,' stands for that divine form of the Lord which exhibits, in a pronounced form, all divine virtues and powers such as unbounded and undying knowledge, energy, strength, valour and effulgence etc., and a fraction of which holds the entire universe. Arjuna's longing to see that form showed that he had never seen it before. Hearing of it from the Lord (X.42) he had developed an irresistible yearning to see that form, and he now felt and believed that the object of his existence would be easily acomplished by a vision of that form.

It may be contended here that Arjuna's longing to see that form betrays lack of faith on his part in the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; for if he had implicit faith in His words and entertained not the least doubt about it, why should he need an ocular proof ? We shall, however, presently see that the objection is wholly untenable. Suppose a man who always spoke the truth and possessed a philosopher's stone or any other wonderful object confided the secret to a friend, and the latter was fully convinced of the presence of that wonderful object with the former. If, however, this report excites his curiosity and stimulates in him the desire to see it with his own eyes simply because he had not seen it before, the desire itself or his giving vent to the same does not necessarily imply lack of faith in the words of that truthful man. Even so, since Arjuna had never seen that wonderful form before, the desire on his part to see it and his giving expression to that desire cannot be interpreted as having proceeded from lack of faith. On the other hand, the desire to see it presupposes his faith.

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो।
योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम्॥ ४॥

प्रभो O Lord; यदि if; मया by me; तत् that (form); द्रष्टुम शक्यम् is capable of being seen; इति so; त्वम् You; मन्यसे think; ततः then; योगेश्वर O Lord of Yoga; अव्ययम् आत्मानम् that imperishable form; मे to me; दर्शय reveal.

Kṛṣṇa, if You think that it can be seen by me, then, O Lord of Yoga, reveal to me Your imperishable form. (4)

The use of the vocative 'Prabho' with reference to Śrī Kṛṣṇa indicates that being the creator, preserver and destroyer of the whole creation, and the inner controller of all, He is all-powerful. Therefore, even if Arjuna was not duly qualified for a vision of that divine form, the Lord could easily render him fit for the same by His own grace and power. And by addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Yogeśvara' Arjuna seeks to convey that being the Master of all Yogas He could, if He liked, easily enable Arjuna to see His divine form. Indeed, when even an ordinary Yogī is capable of revealing his glory in ways more than one, it should be much easier for Śrī Kṛṣṇa to do so.

As stated above, Arjuna believed that the glory of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was exactly as it had been depicted by Himself, and he entertained not the least doubt about it. He was also convinced that even if the Lord failed to reveal that form before him, such failure on His part would neither prove that the Lord of all Masters of Yogas was incapable of doing it, nor would it detract in the least from his faith in His words. This much was, however, certain that his yearning for a vision of that divine form was irresistible. And as the knower of all hearts, it was open to the Lord to examine and ascertain whether that desire was genuine and intense. If it was found true, it established his eligibility for that vision. For, being a veritable wish yielding tree to His devotees, the longing of the devotee's heart was all that He cared for, and no other qualifications. Arjuna, therefore, prayed that if the Lord deemed fit he should reveal that form to him.

Thus requested by Arjuna, His supremely loving and faithful devotee, the Lord proceeds to describe His Cosmic Body in the next three verses, and enjoins Arjuna to behold the same.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ॥ ५ ॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; अथ presently; मे My; शतशः सहस्रशः in hundreds and thousands; नानाविधानि multifarious; च and; नानावर्णाकृतीनि of diverse colours and shapes; दिव्यानि divine; रूपाणि forms; पश्य behold.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, behold presently in hundreds and thousands, My multifarious divine forms, of various colours and shapes. (5)

The words 'Śataśaḥ' and 'Sahasraśaḥ' here are indicative of an infinite number. The Lord thus calls upon Arjuna to witness innumerable forms huddled together in His Cosmic Body.

The word 'Nānāvidhāni' indicates that the forms comprised in the Cosmic Body were not homogeneous but heterogeneous in character, *i.e.,* they belonged to different species, such as gods, human beings and other lower forms of beings, both animate and inanimate.

The use of the word 'Divyāni' in this verse indicates that the multitudinous forms

seen in the Cosmic Body were all marvellous and transcendent in character, having been brought forth by His wornderful power of Yoga.

पश्यादित्यान्वसून्रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा।
बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत॥ ६॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; आदित्यान् the (twelve) sons of Aditi; वसून् the (eight) Vasus; रुद्रान् the (eleven) Rudras; अश्विनौ the two Aśvinīkumāras (the physicians of gods); मरुतः (and) the Maruts (forty-nine in number); पश्य behold; तथा and also; बहूनि many more; अदृष्टपूर्वाणि never seen before; आश्चर्याणि marvellous forms; पश्य witness.

Behold in Me, Arjuna, the twelve sons of Aditi, the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras (gods of destruction), the two Aśvinīkumāras* (the twin-born physicians of gods) and the fortynine Maruts (wind-gods), and witness many more wonderful forms never seen before. (6)

The words 'Ādityān' etc., denote the principal varieties of gods residing in heaven. By naming these varieties in particular, the Lord intends to convey that all the gods of heaven were to be seen in His Cosmic Body. The individual names of and other particulars about these principal varieties of gods have already been given in the commentary on verses 21 and 23 of Chapter X. Hence it is needless to repeat them here.

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम्।
मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद्द्रष्टुमिच्छसि॥ ७॥

गुडाकेश O conqueror of sleep, Arjuna; अद्य now; इह here; मम देहे in My Body; एकस्थम् concentrated; सचराचरम् consisting of both animate and inanimate beings; कृत्स्नम् जगत् the entire creation; पश्य behold; च and; अन्यत् यत् whatever else; द्रष्टुम् to see; इच्छसि you desire.

Arjuna, behold as concentrated within this body of Mine the entire creation consisting of both animate and inaminate beings, and whatever else you desire to see. (7)

By addressing Arjuna as 'Guḍākeśa' the Lord invites him to observe the Cosmic Body with due care and attention, so as to leave no room for any doubt or misconception with regard to the same.

The indeclinable 'Adya' in this verse has been used in the sense of 'now'. The Lord thereby indicates that He was very prompt in revealing the form which Arjuna desired to see; in fact, He revealed it the moment Arjuna expressed the desire to see it.

The word 'Cara' stands for all creatures

* The twin-born Aśvinīkumāras are believed to have been born of Sañjñā, wife of the sun-god (see *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* III.ii.7; *Agni-Purāṇa* 273.4). Some authors hold that they were born of Aditi through Kaśyapa (Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa, Āraṇya,* XIV.14); while others maintain that they sprang from Brahmā's ears (*Vāyu-Purāṇa* LXV.57). All these accounts are true, being the records of different Kalpas. The two brothers received their spritual knowledge from the sage Dadhyaṅ (*Ṛgveda* I.XVII.116.12, *Devī-Bhāgavata* VII.36). Propitiated by Sukanyā, daughter of King Śaryāti and wife of sage Cyavana, they rejuvenated the old and blind Cyavana and restored his vision (*Devī-Bhāgavata* VII.4-5). Many stories about these twin gods are told in the Purāṇas, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

possessing motion, e.g., beasts, birds, insects, moths gods and human beings etc; while 'Acara' denotes things devoid of motion, e.g., hills trees etc. The word 'Jagat', qualified by the adjectives 'Kṛtsnam' and 'Sacarācaram', therefore signifies the entire universe consisting of all such creatures, together with their bodies and senses, places of enjoyment and objects of enjoyment. By inviting Arjuna to behold the entire creation in a part of His body seated before him in his chariot the Lord gave an ocular demonstration before Arjuna of the statement contained in the concluding verse of Chapter X, *viz.*, that He held the entire universe in a fraction of His Being.

By asking Arjuna to behold whatever else he desired to see, the lord intends to convey that, besides the universe as it existed then, Arjuna could directly perceive at that moment in a part of His Body any spectacle expressive of the Lord's virtues and glory etc., scenes of his own victory and the enemy's defeat, or any other incident relating to the past, present or future, that he should like to witness.

When Arjuna failed to see the divine form even though repeatedly enjoined in the preceding three verses, the Lord, who is the inner witness of all and knew the cause of Arjuna's failure to see that form, now offers to bestow the gift of divine vision on him.

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्॥ ८॥

तु however; माम् Me; अनेन स्वचक्षुषा with these (physical) eyes of yours; द्रष्टुम् to perceive; न not; एव indeed; शक्यसे you are able; ते to You; दिव्यम् चक्षुः the divine eye; ददामि I vouchsafe; मे My; ऐश्वरम् योगम् divine power of Yoga; पश्य behold.

But surely you cannot see Me with these human eyes of yours; therefore; I vouchsafe to you the divine eye. With this you behold My divine power of Yoga. (8)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was glad that Arjuna sought to obtain a vision of His divine form endowed with His wonderful power of Yoga; and the Lord for His own part was prepared to reveal that form to him. But at the same time He was afraid that His transcendent form could not be seen with the ordinary human eyes, and that Arjuna lacked the faculty which was needed for obtaining a vision of that form. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

By His own power of Yoga the Lord bestowed on Arjuna a kind of Yogic faculty in order to enable him to obtain a vision of the Cosmic Body. This faculty endowed him with supernatural power and qualified him for a vision of that divine form. It is this Yogic faculty which is referred to here by the words 'Divyaṁ Cakṣuḥ'. A similar type of divine vision was vouchsafed to Sañjaya by the divine Vedavyāsa at the commencement of the Mahābhārata war.

A close study of this episode does not warrant the conlcusion that the vision of the Cosmic Body by Arjuna consisted only in realizing through spiritual wisdom that the entire objective world is a manifestation of God, or that the 'divine eye' said to have been conferred on him was no other than this realization. The exhortation to visualize the whole universe in a part of His being through spiritual enlightenment had already

been given by the Lord to Arjuna at the end of Chapter X, and the same had also been accepted by Arjuna. The fact that Arjuna longs to perceive with his own eyes the divine form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa endowed with strength, energy, valour and effulgence even after this acceptance, and that the Lord Himself is inviting Arjuna to behold the entire universe as concentrated in the very form present before his eyes, precludes the assumption that the vision was nothing but a form of spiritual realization.

Apart from this, the description given by the Lord, of His Cosmic Body, also confirms the view that the divine form in which Arjuna beheld the various phenomena of the whole universe as well as the future events of the war and their consequences, was present before his eyes. This drives us to the conclusion that the cosmos in which Arjuna found himself present was different from the cosmos as seen by him in the body of the Lord. Had it been otherwise, it would not have been possible to see the entire space between heaven and earth and all the quarters covered by the Cosmic Body. At the sight of that dreadful form of the Lord, Arjuna, was already seized with wonder, bewilderment, fear and confusion. This also goes to disprove the theory that the Lord had simply awakened Arjuna through spiritual enlightenment to a sense of His identity with the objective universe. Had it been so, Arjuna would have no cause for fear, agony, bewilderment confusion and so on.

Nor can it be held that just as distant sounds can be heard and distant scenes witnessed with the help of scientific instruments like the modern radio, Arjuna was likewise equipped by the Lord with an instrument which enabled him to obtain an unobstructed view of the whole universe from where he stood, and that the same has been spoken of in this verse as the divine eye. For instruments like the Radio enable one to hear only such distant sounds and witness only such distant scenes as are being generated or occurring at that very moment in a particular part of the universe. Things occuring in the various parts of the universe cannot be seen or heard with the help of a single instrument all at once at one and the same place. Nor can such an instrument enable one to read the thoughts of another, or foresee future events. Besides, there is nothing in this context to indicate that Arjuna beheld the Cosmic Body of the Lord with the aid of a scientific instrument. Therefore, such an assumption, would be wholly unwarranted. Of course, on the basis of scientific inventions like the Radio etc., the sceptical minds of the present generation can be persuaded to a certain extent to believe that when it is possible to hear distant sounds and see distant sights with the help of physical instruments like the Radio Television, the possibility of beholding the Cosmic Body of the Lord by dint of the Yogic power bestowed by Him can never be questioned. At the same time it should be borne in mind in this connection that it was no conjuring trick on the part of the Lord, which made Arjuna behold scenes and occurrences without any corresponding reality as in a dream. The form which Arjuna saw was an undisguised reality, and the sole means of perceiving it was the divine eye in the form Yogic power obtained through the grace of God.

The form which Arjuna saw was divine in essence. It was through His own wonderful power of Yoga that the lord had evolved that form and showed it to Arjuna. Hence the very sight of that form automatically revealed His wonderful power of Yoga. The word 'Yogam', qualified by the adjective 'Aiśvaram', therefore, denotes the Cosmic Body of the Lord together with His

wonderful power of Yoga which was instrumental in evolving it; and by exhorting Arjuna to behold such Yoga the Lord practically invites the latter to witness His power of Yoga through a sight of His Cosmic Body.

Sañjaya now proceeds to describe in the next five verses the nature of the divine Cosmic Body revealed by the Lord to Arjuna after blessing him with the divine vision.

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम्॥ ९॥

राजन् O king; महायोगेश्वरः the supreme Master or Yoga; हरिः the Lord who takes away all sins; एवम् so; उक्त्वा saying; ततः then; पार्थाय to the son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; परमम् ऐश्वरम् supremely glorious; रूपम् divine form; दर्शयामास revealed.

Sañjaya said: My lord ! having spoken thus, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme Master of Yoga, forthwith revealed to Arjuna His supremely glorious divine Form. (9)

By using the words 'Mahāyogeśvaraḥ' and 'Hariḥ' with reference to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Sañjaya brings home to Dhṛtarāṣṭra the wonderful potency and power of the Lord, and thereby cautions him. The intention is to convey that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was no ordinary human being, but God Himself. The greatest of Yogīs cannot reveal the divine Cosmic Body which Śrī Kṛṣṇa showed to Arjuna, and which Sañjaya was now going to describe. God alone can reveal such a form.

That which is pure, superb and transcendent is called 'Parama', and anything exhibiting the virtues, glory and effulgence of God and clothed with His divine power of Yoga is called 'Aiśvara' of divine. The Cosmic Body revealed by the Lord to Arjuna was transcendent and divine in character, superb and all-effulgent, and not something mundane or material. It was out of kindness to His most beloved devotee Arjuna, and with a view to awakening him to a sense of His wonderful glory, that the Lord evolved and manifested this form of His own wonderful power of Yoga. This is what is meant by the use of the word 'Rūpam' qualified by the adjectives 'Paramam, and 'Aiśvaram' in the above verse.

अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम्।
अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम्॥ १०॥
दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम्।
सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवमनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम्॥ ११॥

अनेकवक्त्रनयनम् possessing many mouths and eyes; अनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् presenting many a wonderful sight; अनेकदिव्याभरणम् decked with many divine ornaments; दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् wielding many uplifted weapons; दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरम् wearing divine wreaths and garments; दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् besmeared all over with divine sandal-pastes; सर्वाश्चर्यमयम् full of all wonders; अनन्तम् inifinite; विश्वतोमुखम् having faces on all sides, cosmic in form; देवम् the supreme Deity (God).

Arjuna saw the supreme Deity possessing many mouths and eyes, presenting many a wonderful sight, decked with many divine ornaments, wielding many uplifted divine weapons, wearing divine garlands and clothes, besmeared all over with divine sandal-pastes, full of all wonders, infinite and having faces on all sides. (10,11)

The divine form which Arjuna saw has been described as having the moon and the sun for its two principal eyes (XI.19); but apart from them, it possessed many other mouths and eyes. That is why it is called 'Anekavaktranayanam.'

A sight which has never been seen before, and which is strange and marvellous in character, is called 'Adbhutadarśanam'. In that Cosmic Body of the Lord, Arjuna beheld innumerable such sights; hence it has been called 'Anekādbhutadarśnam'.

An ornament which is exceptionally brilliant and supramundane is called a 'Divyābharaṇa'. The form which Arjuna saw was adorned with innumerable such divine ornaments; hence it has been spoken of as 'Anekadivyābharaṇam'.

Weapons used in warfare are termed as 'Āyudha'. Any such weapons exhibiting supernatural qualities and effulgence is called a 'divine weapon'. For example, the weapons of Viṣṇu, *viz.*, the Discus, Club, Bow etc., are all divine weapons. The Lord as seen by Arjuna held in His uplifted hands many such 'divine' weapons; hence the verse refers to Him as 'Divyānekodyatāyudham'.

He who is decked with many superb, brilliant and supernatural wreaths and garments is called 'Divyamālyāmbaradhara'. The Lord in His Cosmic Form had many such garlands hanging from His neck and was also clad in various kinds of beautiful and shining costumes; hence the above adjective has been used with reference to Him.

Any fragrant substance which is far superior to other fragrant substances like the sandal-paste and possesses a supernatural odour which can be perceived only by a divinized sense, and not by the material senses, is called a 'Divya Gandha'. A form which is besmeared all over with fragrant substances of such a superb and divine character is known as 'Divya-gandhānulepanam.'

Everything forming part of that Cosmic Body, *viz.*, the countless mouths, eyes, ornaments weapons, wreaths, garments and fragrant substances, was wonderful. Hence the verse describes it as 'Sarvāścaryamayam' (full of all wonders).

That which is infinite and is unbounded by space is called 'Ananta'. The Cosmic Body of the Lord beheld by Arjuna was limitless in dimension; hence the term 'Ananta' has been applied with reference to it.

The numberless faces forming part of that Cosmic Body of the Lord were spread all over the universe; hence He has been styled 'Viśvatomukha'.

A being possessed of lustre and worthy of adoration is called a 'Deva'. The Cosmic Body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was supremely effulgent; hence He is referred to as 'Deva' in this verse.

The next verse describes the effulgence of the supreme Deity manifested in that Cosmic Form.

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता।
यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ १२ ॥

दिवि in the heavens; सूर्यसहस्रस्य of a thousand sons; युगपत् all at once; उत्थिता bursting forth; भा: effulgence; भवेत् if there be; सा (even) that; तस्य महात्मन: of that all-pervading Lord; भास: to the splendour; सदृशी approximating; यदि hardly; स्यात् would prove.

If there be the effulgence of a thousand suns bursting forth all at once in the heavens, even that would hardly approach the splendour of the mighty Lord. (12)

By comparing the splendour of the Lord with the effulgence of a thousand suns appearing all at once in the sky the verse practically declares it as incomparable. In other words, just as a thousand stars twinkling together in the sky cannot compare with the sun, even so the effulgence of a thousand suns shining all at once in the sky could not approach the splendour of the Cosmic Body of the Lord. The reason for this is that while the effulgence of the sun is transient, material and finite, the splendour of the Cosmic Body of the Lord was eternal, divine, transcendent and infinite.

Sañjaya now proceeds to describe how Arjuna beheld the entire universe in that brilliant and wonderful form of the Lord.

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा।
अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा॥ १३॥

पाण्डव: the son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; तदा then; अनेकधा manifold; प्रविभक्तम् divided; कृत्स्नम् जगत् the whole universe; देवदेवस्य of the supreme Deity, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa; तत्र शरीरे in that Body; एकस्थम् concentrated at one place; अपश्यत् beheld.

Concentrated at one place in the person of that supreme Deity, Arjuna then beheld the whole universe with its manifold divisions. (13)

The word 'Tadā' (then) refers to the time when the Lord blessed Arjuna with the divine eye, and invited him to behold His Cosmic Body together with His wonderful power of Yoga (XI.8).

The use of the qualifications 'Anekadhā Pravibhaktam' and 'Kṛtsnam' with the word 'Jagat' is intended to convey that Arjuna beheld, in the person of the supreme Deity, the entire universe with its manifold divisions in the shape of enjoyers like the gods, human beings, beasts, birds, moths, insects and trees etc., places of enjoyment (of pleasure and pain) like the earth, the intermediate region, heaven and the lower or subterranean regions and the innumerable objects of their enjoyment. In other words, it was not that he was only a particular part of the universe, or that he saw all these divisions jumbled together in a confused mass, but he saw the universe extended as it is, with all its details clearly defined.

Arjuna actually saw with his divine eye what he was told by the Lord at the end of Chapter X, viz., that He stood holding the entire universe in a part of His being. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the word 'Ekastham' (concentrated at one place) in the present verse.

The indeclinable 'Tatra' connects the verse with the description contained in the foregoing verses and qualifies the person of the supreme Deity, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the best of all persons, and the object of worship even of the highest gods like Brahmā.

The next verse describes the sequel to the perception by Arjuna of the Cosmic Body of the Lord as stated above.

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनञ्जयः।
प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत॥ १४॥

ततः therefore; सः that; विस्मयाविष्टः overcome with wonder; हृष्टरोमा with the hair standing on end; धनञ्जयः Arjuna (*lit.*, a conqueror or riches); देवम् the shining Lord; शिरसा with his head (bent low); प्रणम्य making obeisance to; कृताञ्जलिः with his palms joined together; अभाषत spoke.

Then Arjuna, full of wonder and with the hair standing on end, reverentially bowed his head to the divine Lord, and with joined palms addressed Him thus. (14)

The use of the word 'Tataḥ' (thereafter) in this verse is intended to show how the sight of that wonderful and glorious form of the Lord reacted on Arjuna's mind and body.

Arjuna had accumulated untold riches by conquering a number of princes. This earned him the title of 'Dhanañjaya.' Again, the use of the adjectives 'Vismayāviṣṭaḥ' and 'Hṛṣṭaromā' with 'Dhanañjayaḥ' is intended to show that Arjuna was overwhelmed with joy and wonder at the sight of that divine form. Arjuna had never seen such a glorious form of the Lord before; hence the sight of that form impressed his mind to a certain extent with the infinite glory of the Lord. In other words, he now appreciated the divine glory even though partially. Hence his joy and wonder knew no bounds.

The word 'Devam' in the present verse refers to the all-effulgent Cosmic Body of the Lord. The sight of that majestic Form of the Lord, full of innumerable wonderful sights, supremely effulgent and invested with infinite glory, created such a deep impression on Arjuna's mind that the sentiment the friendship he had cherished for the Lord from his early days vanished all of a sudden as it were from his heart, and he looked very small in his own eyes in comparison with the infintie glory of the Lord. He was inspired with a feeling of deep reverence for the Lord, and the intensity of that feeling reacting on his frame like an electric current bent down his head that very moment and laid it at the feet of the Lord. Thereafter with joined palms he began to offer his praises to the Lord with utmost humility and reverence.

Thus overwhelmed with joy and wonder, and describing the sight seen by him within the Lord's Cosmic Body, Arjuna now offers his praises to that Form.

अर्जुन उवाच

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे सर्वांस्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्घान्।
ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थमृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान्॥ १५॥

देव O Lord; तव देहे within Your person; सर्वान् देवान् all gods; तथा and; भूतविशेषसङ्घान् hosts of different beings; कमलासनस्थम् perched on his lotus-seat; ब्रह्माणम् Brahmā (the creator); ईशम् Lord Śiva; च and; सर्वान् ऋषीन् all Ṛṣis; च and; दिव्यान् celestial; उरगान् serpents; पश्यामि I behold.

Arjuna said: Lord, I behold within Your body all gods and hosts of different beings, Brahmā throned on his lotus-seat, Śiva and all Ṛṣis and celestial serpents. (15)

The use of the vocative 'Deva' for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is indicative of the feeling of extreme reverence and devotion which inspired Arjuna at the sight of the effulgent and wonderful form of the Lord.

The words 'Tava Dehe' indicate that Arjuna beheld all the sights described by him in this verse in the very body of the Lord present before his eyes.

Of the various orders of creation inhabiting the universe, gods are recognized as the best and the highest. That is the reason why Arjuna mentions them apart from the multitudes of different beings, in which they are also included.

Similarly, Brahmā and Śiva are objects of adoration even for the gods and fall in the category of divine beings; hence they have been mentioned apart from the gods with whom they are generally ranked. The lotus-seat on which Brahmā is said to be throned is none other than the lotus sprung from the navel of Bhagavān Viṣṇu. The use of the adjective 'Kamalāsanstham' (throned on his lotus-seat) with 'Brahmāṇam', therefore, shows that Arjuna beheld in the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa not only Brahmā but his progenitor Viṣṇu as well, who is only another form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Among earthly beings Ṛṣis are regarded as the best; and even so celestial serpents like Vāsuki and others rank as the highest among the denizens of the nether worlds. That is why they have been mentioned apart from the multitudes of different beings, in which they are naturally included.

By mentioning thus the principal types of beings inhabiting the earth, the celestial regions and the nether worlds, Arjuna shows that he beheld all the three words in the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम्।
नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥ १६ ॥

विश्वेश्वर O Lord of the universe; त्वाम् You; अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रम् endowed with numerous arms, bellies, mouths and eyes; सर्वतः अनन्तरूपम् (and) having innumerable forms extended on all sides; पश्यामि I see; विश्वरूप O Lord manifested in the form of the universe; तव Your; न neither; अन्तम् the end; न nor; मध्यम् the middle; न nor; पुनः again; आदिम् the beginning; पश्यामि I behold.

O lord of the universe, I see You endowed with numerous arms, bellies, mouths, and eyes and having innumerable forms extended on all sides. I see neitehr Your beginning nor middle, nor even Your end, manifested as You are in the form of the universe. (16)

The use of the vocatives 'Visveśvara' and 'Viśvarūpa' with reference to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is intended to convey that He is the creator and destroyer as well as the supreme Ruler of the whole universe, appointing all to their respective duties, and that this universe is, really speaking, nothing but His own manifestation, that is to say, He is both its efficient and material cause.

The statement that Arjuna saw no

beginning, middle or end of the Lord shows, that the Cosmic Body of the Lord was infinite on all sides. Arjuna saw no limit on it.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम्।
पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं समन्ताद्दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमप्रमेयम्॥ १७॥

त्वाम् You; किरीटिनम् adorned with diadems; गदिनम् armed with clubs; च and; चक्रिणम् wielding discuses; सर्वतः all round; दीप्तिमन्तम् flaming; तेजोराशिम् a mass of splendour; दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिम् having the brilliance of a blazing fire and the sun; दुर्निरीक्ष्यम् hard to gaze at; समन्तात् on all sides; अप्रमेयम् immeasurable; पश्यामि I behold.

I see You endowed with diadems, clubs and discuses, a mass of splendour flaming all round, having the brilliance of a blazing fire and the sun, hard to gaze at and immeasurable on all sides. (17)

By speaking of the Lord as 'Kirīṭinaṁ', 'Gadinaṁ' and 'Cakriṇaṁ' Arjuna shows that He retained the famous emblems of Bhagavān Viṣṇu even in that wonderful form.

The adjective 'Dīptānalārkadyutiṁ' has been used over and above 'Sarvato Dīptimantaṁ' and 'Tejorāśiṁ' just in order to give and accurate idea of the splendour and brilliance of the Cosmic Body. The splendour and brilliance of the Cosmic Body resembled the effulgence of a blazing fire and the sun only in kind and not in degree; It was infinitely more resplendent than the latter. The brilliance of fire and the sun is visible only in a particular part of the universe, whereas the brilliance of the Cosmic Body could be seen everywhere and on all sides.

Clothed as it was with a most wonderful type of effulgence, that resplendent form of the Lord dazzled the human eyes; they could not bear its sight. Hence it has been spoken of as 'Durnirīkṣyam' (difficult to gaze at) for the common man. Arjuna, however, was blessed with the divine eye only for a vision of that Form; and it was with that eye that he perceived It. Hence, though producing a blinding effect on the eyes of others, it was not so in the case of Arjuna.

By speaking of the Lord as 'Samantāt Aprameyaṁ' Arjuna indicates that it was not possible by any means to know His virtues, glory, power and identity in their entirety.

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्।
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे॥ १८॥

त्वम् You (are); वेदितव्यम् worthy of being known; परमम् अक्षरम् the supreme Indestructible or God; त्वम् You (are); अस्य विश्वस्य of this universe; परम् निधानम् the ultimate refuge; त्वम् You (are); शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता the protector of the ageless Dharma; त्वम् You; अव्ययः imperishable; सनातनः पुरुषः the eternal Being; मे मतः are considered by me.

You are the supreme indestructible worthy of being known; You are the ultimate refuge of this universe. You are, again, the protector of the ageless Dharma; I consider You to be the eternal imperishable Being. (18)

The word 'Akṣaraṁ', qualified by the adjective 'Veditavyaṁ' and 'Paramaṁ', stands for the absolute and formless supreme Divinity or Brahma, the embodiment of

Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, the ultimate Reality which souls aspiring for liberation seek to know and for the knowledge of which seekers of Truth devote themselves to various forms of spiritual practice, and which has been referred to as Brahma in VIII.3. By predicating this term of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna shows that the sight of His Cosmic Body had convinced him of His identity with the absolute of supreme Brahma.

'Nidhāna' means a resting-place or refuge. By speaking of the Lord as the 'Nidhāna' or ultimate resort of this universe Arjuna shows that the entire universe both as cause and effect, rests in God, and is sustained by Him; hence He is its ultimate resort.

The religion propounded by the Vedas has existed from time without beginning and shall exist for ever. Hence it has been referred to here as 'Śāśvata Dharma' or 'Sanātana Dharma' as it is now called. Descending again and again on this earth God Himself protects this Dharma; hence Arjuna speaks of Him here as 'Śāśvata-dharmagoptā' or Protector of the eternal Religion.

By referring to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Avyaya Sanātana Puruṣa' Arjuna shows that He was no other than God Almighty, otherwise known as the eternal supreme Puruṣa, the imperishable and immutable creator and destroyer of the universe.

अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्यमनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम्।
पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम्॥ १९॥

त्वाम् You; अनादिमध्यान्तम् having no beginning, middle or end; अनन्तवीर्यम् Possessing unlimited prowess; अनन्तबाहुम् endowed with numberless arms; शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् having the sun and the moon for one's eyes; दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रम् having blazing fire for one's mouth; स्वतेजसा by one's rediance; इदम् विश्वम् this universe; तपन्तम् scorching; पश्यामि I behold.

I see You without beginning, middle or end, possessing unlimited prowess and endowed with numberless arms, having the moon and the sun for Your eyes, and blazing fire for Your mouth, and scorching this universe by Your radiance. (19)

In verse 16 Arjuna has already told the Lord that he saw neither His beginning nor middle nor end, and he repeats the same thing in the present verse as well when he says that he saw Him without beginning, middle or end. On closer examination, however, it will be found that the latter statement is no mere repetition of the former. While the former statement was intended to bring out the infinitude of His Cosmic Body, the present verse seeks to convey that He is entirely free from the six types of modification such as birth etc., and therefore eternal. Of the three substantives forming part of the compound word Anādimadhyāntam', 'Ādi' denotes the first type viz., birth; 'Madhya' represents the four intermediate stages of existence, growth, transformation and decay; while 'Anta' stands for the last stage of destruction or death. He who is free from all these modifications is called 'Anādimadhyānta'. Therefore, the real meaning of Arjuna's statement is this verse is that he sees the Lord as entirely free from the six types of modification, viz., birth, existence, growth, transformation, decay and death.

The word, 'Vīrya' is a comprehensive term covering different shades of meaning,

viz., prowess, strength, glory and energy etc. By speaking of the Lord as 'Anantavīrya' in this verse Arjuna seeks to convey that His prowess, strength, energy and glory were unlimited.

Although the form which Arjuna saw had faces on all sides, as stated in verse 11 above, the chief of them had the sun and the moon as its two eyes, and its mouth burning like blazing fire. This is what is meant by speaking of the Lord as 'Śaśisūryanetra' and 'Dīptahutāśavaktra'.

द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः।
दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमुग्रं तवेदं लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन्॥ २०॥

महात्मन् O Soul of the universe; इदम् this; द्यावापृथिव्योः अन्तरम् the space between heaven and earth; च and; सर्वाः दिशः all the quarters; एकेन त्वया by You alone; हि indeed; व्याप्तम् is filled; तव Your; इदम् this; अद्भुतम् transcendent; उग्रम् terrible; रूपम् form; दृष्ट्वा seeing; लोकत्रयम् all the three worlds; प्रव्यथितम् feel alarmed.

Yonder space between heaven and earth and all the quarters are entirely filled by You alone. Seeing this transcendent, dreadful Form of Yours, O Soul of the universe, all the three worlds feel greatly alarmed. (20)

Describing God as the Soul of the entire universe, by using the vocative 'Mahātman'. Arjuna means to say that that Cosmic Body of the Lord was so extensive as to encompass all the space between heaven and earth as well as all the quarters. No space was to be found where that cosmic Body was not present. Side by side Arjuna also witnessed that transcendental and terrible form of the Lord was so frightful that casting a look at it the inhabitants of all these worlds—the heaven, the mortal world and the world comprising the space in between, being struck with fear, were in a great state of alarm and their condition was extremely pitiable.

अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति केचिद्भीताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति।
स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः॥ २१॥

अमी those; हि very; सुरसङ्घाः hosts of gods; त्वाम् You; विशन्ति enter; केचित् (while) some; भीताः terrified; प्राञ्जलयः with palms joined together; गृणन्ति utter (Your names and praises); महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः hosts of Maharṣis and Siddhas; स्वस्ति Let there be peace; इति so; उक्त्वा saying; पुष्कलाभिः स्तुतिभिः through excellent hymns; त्वाम् You; स्तुवन्ति extol.

Yonder hosts of gods are entering You; some with palms joined out of fear are uttering Your names and glories. Multitudes of Maharṣis and Siddhas, saying 'Let there be peace', are extolling You by means of excellent hymns. (21)

The demonstrative adjective 'Amī' is used with reference to objects that lie beyond the range of one's sight. By using this word with 'Surasaṅghāḥ' Arjuna seeks to convey that he saw those very gods whom he had seen some years back during his visit to heaven.

Seeing hosts of gods entering the terrible

form of the Lord the rest of them lost all hope of surviving their companions long, and the thought of their impending doom filled them with fear. With joined palms therefore, they began to utter the names and glories of the Lord and tried to propitiate Him in that way. This is what Arjuna meant by his statement that some with palms joined out of fear were uttering the Lord's names and praises.

Arjuna further saw that multitudes of Maharṣis like Marīci, Aṅgirā and Bhṛgu, and Siddhas of all descriptions, known as well as unknown, on the other hand, far from being seized with fear at the sight of that terrible form, were praying for the well-being of the whole universe and singing paeans of praise to the Lord, knowing as they did the real secret of His identity. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च।
गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्घा वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे॥ २२॥

ये who; रुद्रादित्याः the (eleven) Rudras and the (twelve) sons of Aditi; च and; वसवः (the eight) Vasus; साध्याः the Sādhyas; विश्वे the Viśvedevas; अश्विनौ the two Aśvinīkumāras; च and; मरुतः the Maruts (wind-gods); च and; ऊष्मपाः the manes; च as well as; गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्घा multitudes of Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras and Siddhas; सर्वे all (these); एव indeed; विस्मिताः amazed; त्वाम् You; वीक्षन्ते gaze upon.

The eleven Rudras, twelve Ādityas and eight Vasus, the Sādhyas and Viśvedevas, the two Aśvinīkumāras and forty-nine Maruts, as well as the manes and multitudes of Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras and Siddhas, all these gaze upon You in amazement. (22)

Brief notes on four of the twelve classes of superhuman beings mentioned in this verse, *viz.*, the Rudras, Ādityas, Vasus and Maruts have already been given in the commentaries on verses 21 and 23 of Chapter X, and in the footnote below the 21st; while the Aśvinīkumāras have been dealt with in the footnote below XI.6. The names of the twelve Sādhyas are Manas, Anumantā, Prāṇa, Nara, Yāna, Citti, Haya, Naya, Haṁsa, Nārāyaṇa, Prabhava and Vibhu.* And the ten Viśvedevas are Kratu, Dakṣa, Śrava, Satya, Kāla, Kāma, Dhuni, Kuruvān, Prabhavān and Rocamāna.† The Sādhyas and Viśvedevas represent two of the eight divisions of celestials mentioned in this verse (See *Brahmāṇḍa.*, LXXI.2).

Those who eat hot and steaming rice

---

* मनोऽनुमन्ता प्राणश्च नरो यानश्च वीर्यवान्॥
चित्तिर्हयो नयश्चैव हंसो नारायणस्तथा। प्रभवोऽथ विभुश्चैव साध्या द्वादश जज्ञिरे॥

(*Vāyu.* LXVI.15-16)

The twelve Sādhyas mentioned in the above verse were born of the womb of Dakṣa's daughter Sādhyā, the consort of Dharma. The *Skanda-Purāṇa* gives slightly different names, *viz.*, Manas, Anumantā, Prāṇa, Nara, Apāna, Bhakti, Bhaya, Anagha, Haṁsa, Nārāyaṇa, Vibhu and Prabhu (*Skanda.*, *Prabhāsa.*, XXI.17-18). The difference can be easily explained by the difference of Manvantaras.

† विश्वेदेवास्तु विश्वाया जज्ञिरे दश विश्रुताः।
क्रतुर्दक्षः श्रवः सत्यः कालः कामो धुनिस्तथा। कुरुवान् प्रभवांश्चैव रोचमानश्च ते दश॥

(*Vāyu.* LXVI.31-32)

The ten Viśvedevas were born of the womb of Dharma's wife Viśvā, daughter of Dakṣa. Some Purāṇas give altogether different names. The difference is due to the difference of Manvantaras.

are called Ūṣmapās. The *code of Manu* (III.237) says that the manes eat hot rice. Hence the word 'Ūṣmapāḥ' in this verse should be taken to represent the manes* in general.

The Gandharvas are believed to have been born of the three wives of Kaśyapa, *viz.*, Muni, Prādhā and Ariṣṭā'. They have expert knowledge of the different melodies and are supposed to be proficient in the arts of dancing and instrumental music prevalent in heaven. The Yakṣas are believed to have been born of sage Kaśyapa's wife Khasā. They are also represented in the suite of attendants of Bhagavān Śaṅkara. Kuvera is the recognized head of the Yakṣas and noble Rākṣasas. The Daityas, Dānavas and Rākṣasas, who are the sworn enemies of the Devas, are collectively known as the Asuras. The offspring of Kaśyapa's wife Diti are called Daityas, while those of Danu are named as Dānavas. The Rākṣasas were born in diverse ways. Kapila and others are known by the name of 'Siddha'.

रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं महाबाहो बहुबाहूरुपादम्।
बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकरालं दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम्॥ २३॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed Lord; ते Your; बहुवक्त्रनेत्रम् having many mouths and eyes; बहुबाहूरुपादम् endowed with numerous arms, thighs and feet; बहूदरम् having a number of bellies; बहुदंष्ट्राकरालम् looking fierce with many teeth; महत् colossal; रूपम् form; दृष्ट्वा seeing; लोकाः (all) the worlds; प्रव्यथिताः are terrified; तथा as well as; अहम् I.

Lord, seeing this stupendous and dreadful Form of Yours possessing numerous mouths and eyes, many arms, thighs and feet, many bellies and many teeth, the worlds are terror-struck; so am I. **(23)**

Although Arjuna has already represented the Cosmic Body in verse 16 as possessed of numerous arms, bellies, faces and eyes, he only described in that verse the details of that form as seen by him; whereas the present verse speaks of all the worlds and of Arjuna himself being terrified at the sight of that form. That is the apology for his repeating the same idea in this verse.

Even so in verse 20 Arjuna has already spoken of all the three worlds feeling greatly alarmed at the limitless expanse and dreadfulness of that Form. In the present verse, however, he speaks of himself too being terrified at the sight of the numerous faces, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, bellies and teeth of that terrible Form. This exonerates him from the charge of redundancy.

नभःस्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम्।
दृष्ट्वा हि त्वां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो॥ २४॥

हि because; विष्णो O Viṣṇu (*lit.*, all-pervading Lord); नभःस्पृशम् touching the heavens; दीप्तम् radiant; अनेकवर्णम् multi-coloured; व्यात्ताननम् having one's mouth wide open; दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् possessing large flaming eyes; त्वाम् you; दृष्ट्वा seeing; प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा having one's inner self frightened; धृतिम् self-control; च and; शमम् peace; न not; विन्दामि I find.

* The names of the principal manes have been given in the commentary on X.29.

Lord, seeing Your Form reaching the heavens, effulgent, multi-coloured, having its mouth wide open and possessing large flaming eyes, I, with my inmost self frightened, have lost self-control and find no peace. (24)

By addressing the Lord as 'Viṣṇu' Arjuna seeks to convey that it was Viṣṇu (the Protector of the universe) Himself who appeared on earth in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in order to lighten the burden of the earth. Arjuna thereby made a covert suggestion that the Lord should conceal His Cosmic Body and manifest Himself in the form of Viṣṇu in order to relieve his agony.

Although in verse 20 above Arjuna has already indicated the immeasurable height of the Lord by declaring that the entire space between heaven and earth was filled by Him alone, he only spoke of all the three worlds feeling greatly alarmed at the sight of the inordinate length and breadth of the Cosmic Body; while the present verse speaks of Arjuna's being frightened himself, losing his self-control and finding no peace at the sight of that terrible form. That is the justification for his describing the tremendous height of that Form once more in this verse.

Even so in verse 17 above Arjuna simply referred to the all-round effulgence of the Form as seen by him; whereas the present verse speaks of his own loss of self-control and presence of mind. That is the apology for using in this verse the adjective 'Dīptam', which is only a repetition of 'Dīptimantam' used in the latter verse.

Similarly, even though Arjuna has already expressed his fright at the sight of the tremendous size of the Cosmic Body, he mentions in the present verse the additional fact of his losing self-control and peace of mind. That justifies to a certain extent the repetition of the word 'Pravyathita' as a member of a compound in this verse.

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि।
दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास॥ २५॥

दंष्ट्राकरालानि frightful on account of their teeth; च and; कालानलसन्निभानि blazing like the huge fires at the time of universal destruction; ते Your; मुखानि faces; दृष्ट्वा seeing; दिशः the quarters; न जाने I am at a loss to discern; च and; शर्म happiness; एव even; न not; लभे I find; देवेश O Lord of celestials; जगन्निवास O Resting-place of the universe; प्रसीद be pleased.

Seeing Your faces frightful on account of their teeth, and flaring like the fire at the time of universal destruction, I am utterly bewildered and find no happiness; therefore, be kind to me, O Lord of celestials and Resting-place of the universe. (25)

Although in verse 23 Arjuna has already referred to the dreadful aspect of the Lord's numerous faces, he simply spoke therein of his being frightened at the sight of those faces; whereas in the present verse he mentions the additional fact of his bewilderment and loss of happiness. That accounts to a certain extent for the repetition of the word 'Bahudaṁṣṭrākarālam' occurring in verse 23 as 'Daṁṣṭrākarālam' in this verse, although such repetitions are mainly attributable to his confused state of mind.

Arjuna had already heard from authoritative sources that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the all-pervading Lord of all celestials, and the ultimate refuge of the entire universe, and

also believed that it was so. Now that he directly perceived His Cosmic Body, no doubt was left in his mind about His being the Lord of celestials and the abode of the universe. This is what he seeks to convey by the use of the vocatives 'Deveśa' and 'Jagannivāsa' for the Lord.

Although Arjuna had thus witnessed the divine glory of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the sight of His Cosmic Body, had reduced him to a very sad plight. His self-control and presence of mind had taken leave of him, and he felt utterly amazed and confused. He, therefore, now implores Śrī Kṛṣṇa to have mercy on him and withdraw His terrible Cosmic Form from before his eyes. This is what is meant by his asking Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be kind to him.

अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्घैः।
भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ सहास्मदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः॥ २६॥
वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि।
केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु सन्दृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः॥ २७॥

अमी those; सर्वे all; एव indeed; धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; अवनिपालसङ्घैः सह with hosts of kings; त्वाम् (are entering) You; च and; भीष्मः the granduncle Bhīṣma; द्रोणः the preceptor Droṇa; तथा as well as; असौ that; सूतपुत्रः Karṇa *lit.,* the foster-child of a charioteer); अस्मदीयैः ranging on our side; अपि as well; योधमुख्यैः सह with the principal warriors; त्वरमाणाः rushing headlong; ते Your; दंष्ट्राकरालानि terrible on account of their teeth; भयानकानि fearful; वक्त्राणि mouths; विशन्ति are entering (into); केचित् (while) some; चूर्णितैः उत्तमाङ्गैः with (their) heads crushed; दशनान्तरेषु in the gaps between Your teeth; विलग्नाः stuck up; सन्दृश्यन्ते are seen.

All those sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra with hosts of kings are entering You. Bhīṣma, Droṇa and yonder Karṇa, with the principal warriors on our side as well, are rushing headlong into Your fearful mouths looking all the more terrible on account of their teeth; some are seen stuck up in the gaps between Your teeth with their heads crushed. (26,27)

The words 'Amī Dhṛtarāṣṭrasya Putrāḥ' occurring in this verse should be taken to mean those very sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra whom Arjuna had seen standing in battle array only a moment ago.

The word 'Avanipālasaṅghaiḥ' refers to those hosts of kings who had joined the army of Duryodhana as his allies and comrades in arms.

The patriarch Bhīṣma, and Ācārya Droṇa, the common preceptor of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas both, were the greatest and principal warriors on the Kaurava side. According to Arjuna, it was most difficult to vanquish or kill them. That is the apology for his making special mention of these two warriors.

Again, Arjuna entertained a natural feeling of rivalry in respect of the great hero and warrior Karṇa. The words 'Asau Sūtaputraḥ' should, therefore, be taken to mean that Karṇa who in the eyes of Arjuna had exaggerated notions of his own valour and entertained a very low opinion of other great warriors.

In the next two verses Arjuna illustrates the way in which he found the warriors on both sides entering the dreadful mouths of the Lord, first by the analogy of rivers coursing towards the sea, and then by that of moths rushing into the blazing fire.

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति।
तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति॥ २८॥

यथा as; नदीनाम् of rivers; बहवः myriad; अम्बुवेगाः streams; समुद्रम् अभिमुखाः in the direction of the ocean; एव only; द्रवन्ति rush; तथा so; अमी those; नरलोकवीराः warriors of the mortal world; तव Your; अभिविज्वलन्ति flaming on all sides; वक्त्राणि mouths; विशन्ति enter.

As the myriad streams of rivers rush towards the sea alone, so do those warriors of the mortal world enter Your flaming mouths. (28)

The present verse speaks of the entry, into the mouths of the Lord, of Bhīṣma, Droṇa and other notable warriors, who had been striving for God-realization and were compelled to take up arms much against their will, and who were destined to attain union with God by falling on the battle-field. That is why they have been glorified as 'Naralokavīrāḥ' (warriors of the mortal world). Distinguished as they were in the trial of physical strength, they were equally brave in fighting their internal foes in the shape of lust, anger etc., and had thus won their laurels in the field of spiritual struggle for God-realization as well. By applying the analogy of rivers rushing towards the ocean in their case, Arjuna shows that like rivers, which have a natural tendency to flow towards the ocean and finally lose their names and identity in the ocean, those valiant devotees too were marching with their faces turned towards God and eventually attaining union with Him.

By speaking of the mouths of the Lord as flaming on all sides (Abhivijavalanti) Arjuna shows that just as the ocean is full of water on all sides, and the waters of the rivers become one with it on entering it, even so the mouths of the Lord were blazing furiously on all sides, and the brave devotees who entered them lost their external forms in the flames of those blazing mouths and, becoming fiery themselves, attained oneness with Him.

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः।
तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोकास्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः॥ २९॥

यथा as; पतङ्गाः moths; नाशाय For extinction (out of their folly); प्रदीप्तम् ज्वलनम् the blazing fire; समृद्धवेगाः with quickened speed; विशन्ति rush into; तथा एव even so; लोकाः (all those) people; अपि too; नाशाय For annihilation; तव Your; वक्त्राणि mouths; समृद्धवेगाः with great rapidity; विशन्ति enter.

As moths rush with great speed into the blazing fire for extinction out of their folly, even so all these people are with great rapidity entering Your mouths to meet their doom. (29)

The present verse speaks of the entry into the mouths of the Lord of those ordinary warriors, other than the devotees of God mentioned in the preceding verse, who had

voluntarily entered the war and were going to meet their doom. It is therefore that Arjuna compares them with moths, who foolishly court their own destruction.

Describing thus with the help of illustrations the entry into Lord's mouths of warriors in both the armies, Arjuna now reveals the process of their destruction by the Lord.

लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ताल्लोकान्समग्रान्वदनैर्ज्वलद्भिः।
तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो॥ ३०॥

समग्रान् लोकान् all those people; ज्वलद्भिः वदनैः through Your blazing mouths; ग्रसमानः devouring; समन्तात् on all sides; लेलिह्यसे You lick; विष्णो O Viṣṇu (all pervading Lord); तव Your; उग्राः भासः terrible splendours; समग्रम् जगत् the entire universe; तेजोभिः with radiance; आपूर्य filling; प्रतपन्ति are burning.

Swallowing through Your blazing mouths; You are licking all those people on all sides. Lord, Your terrible splendours are burning the entire universe, filling it with radiance. (30)

Arjuna, frightened by viewing that dreadful form of God and describing it, says that, O, Lord, you are swallowing by your terrific mouths from whom horrible flames are radiating forth. In spite of this, You are licking Your tongue with a feeling of unsatiation and with the blaze of Your horrible lustre, the entire world is becoming extremely afflicted.

Requested by Arjuna in verse 3 above to reveal His glorious divine form, the Lord manifested His Cosmic Body before him; but the very sight of that dreadful form struck terror into his heart, and filled him with curiosity as to who Śrī Kṛṣṇa really was and what He proposed to do with that most terrible form of His. Accordingly, he now approaches the Lord with the following question:—

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद।
विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम्॥ ३१॥

मे me; आख्याहि tell; भवान् You; उग्ररूपः possessing such a terrible form; कः who; देववर O best of gods; ते to You; नमः obeisance; अस्तु let there be; प्रसीद be pleased; आद्यम् the Primal Being; भवन्तम् You; विज्ञातुम् to know in particular; इच्छामि I desire; हि because; तव Your; प्रवृत्तिम् purpose; न not; प्रजानामि I know.

Tell me who You are with a form so terrible. My obeisance to You, O best of gods; be kind to me, I wish to know You, the Primal Being, in particular; for I know not Your purpose. (31)

Arjuna really did not know the motive of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in revealing that frightful form in which he saw the warriors on both sides meet with their doom, and what He proposed to do in the immediate future. Arjuna, therefore, seeks enlightenment on this point from the Lord when he says; 'I know not Your purpose.'

Showing the reason for His assuming the terrible form, the Lord now answers Arjuna's queries in a serial order.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः।
ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥ ३२ ॥

लोकक्षयकृत् the destroyer of the worlds; **प्रवृद्धः** inflamed; **कालः** Kāla (the eternal Time-Spirit); **अस्मि** I am; **इह** at this time; **लोकान्** (these) people; **समाहर्तुम्** to exterminate; **प्रवृत्तः** (I am) out; **ये** who; **प्रत्यनीकेषु** in the enemy's ranks; **अवस्थिताः** arrayed; **योधाः** warriors (there are); **सर्वे** all (these); **त्वाम्** You; **ऋते** without; **अपि** even; **न भविष्यन्ति** shall not survive.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I am inflamed Kāla (the eternal Time-Spirit), the destroyer of the worlds. I am out to exterminate these people. Even without you all those warriors arrayed in the enemy's camp must die. (32)

The statement; "I am inflamed Kāla, the destroyer of the worlds" answers the first part of Arjuna's query, *viz.,* "Who are you ?" The Lord thereby seeks to convey that He was God Himself, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the whole universe. At that particular moment, however, He was playing the role of the Destroyer, Kāla.

The Lord's assertion that He was out to exterminate people supplies the answer to the second part of Arjuna's query implied in the words "I know not Your purpose." He thereby intends to convey that all His efforts at that moments were directed towards exterminating people and that it was to bring home this truth to him that He had shown to Arjuna the hideous sight of universal destruction on the screen of His Cosmic Body.

It will be remembered here that Arjuna was seized with a fit of faint heartedness when he saw his own preceptors, uncles, cousins and other relatives arrayed for battle, and was more or less inclined to retire from the field of battle. The Lord warns him against such a course by telling him that he would not be able to save his kinsmen even if he desisted from war and refused to strike them; for their doom had been sealed. When the Lord Himself was bent upon their destruction, their chances for survival were nil. Therefore, Arjuna would do well not to retire from the battle, and his true interests lay in taking up arms against the enemy at the Lord's behest. This is what the Lord seeks to impress on Arjuna's mind by the latter half of this verse.

Even though Arjuna beheld in the Cosmic Body of the Lord the warriors on both sides rushing to meet their doom, the Lord refers in this verse to the warriors of the Kaurava army alone. The reason is not far to seek. Since the warriors on his own side were not likely to be killed by Arjuna, it could not be said with reference to them that they would not survive even if Arjuna spared them. Apart from this, the Lord was quite justified in making the above assertion even with a view to encouraging Arjuna. The Lord was thus trying as it were to impress on Arjuna's mind the fact that the warriors arrayed in the enemy's camp were as good as dead, and that their extermination would not entail much exertion on his part.

Thus replying to Arjuna's query the Lord shows in the next two verses the all-round advantages of participation in the war and, encouraging Arjuna to fight, says:—

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व जित्वा शत्रून्भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम्।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन्॥ ३३॥

तस्मात् therefore; त्वम् You; उत्तिष्ठ arise; यशः glory; लभस्व win; शत्रून् foes; जित्वा conquering; समृद्धम् राज्यम् the affluent kingdom; भुङ्क्ष्व enjoy; एते all these (warriors); पूर्वम् एव even before; मया एव by Me alone; निहताः have been killed; सव्यसाचिन् O ambidextrous bowman, Arjuna; निमित्तमात्रम् a mere instrument; भव do you become.

Therefore, do you arise and win glory; conquering foes, enjoy the affluent kingdom. These warriors stand already slain by Me; be you only an instrument, Arjuna. (33)

When it was a settled fact that all the warriors on the enemy's side must die at all events, no matter if Arjuna struck them or stayed his hand, active participation in the war was the only profitable course for him from every point of view. On no account should Arjuna desist from war under such circumstances, but should stand up enthusiastically and fight. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the words 'Tasmāt Uttiṣṭha'.

By asking Arjuna to win glory and, conquering foes, to enjoy the affluent kingdom the Lord is giving a clear indication to him that he was sure to attain victory over his enemies.

Arjuna could pull the bow-string as easily with the left as with his right hand. This had earned his the title of 'Savyasācī'. Addressing him by this name, and asking him to be His tool, the Lord seeks to convey that it was exceptionally easy for him to vanquish the heroes on the other side. Moreover, he would not be really required to kill his foes, since he had actually seen with his own eyes that they had all been already killed by the Lord. Arjuna would only enjoy the reputation of having vanquished and killed his enemies. Therefore, he should not entertain the least scruple about killing them.

There is one more idea underlying the Lord's advice to Arjuna to work as His tool. The Lord thereby seeks to impress on Arjuna's mind the fact that he would incur no sin by killing those warriors: for he was only serving as an instrument in killing them in a passage of arms that had devolved on him as a duty by virtue of his being a member of the warrior class. Far from incurring any sin, he would on the other hand be performing his duty as a Kṣatriya. Therefore, without entertaining any misgiving on this point, he should throw himself in the fight heart and soul, shaking off egoism and the feeling of mineness.

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान्।
मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान्॥ ३४॥

द्रोणम् Ācārya Droṇa; च and; भीष्मम् the patriarch Bhīṣma; च and; जयद्रथम् King Jayadratha; च and; कर्णम् the celebrated Karṇa; तथा even so; अन्यान् अपि even other; मया by Me; हतान् slain; योधवीरान् heroic warriors; त्वम् you; जहि kill; मा व्यथिष्ठाः fear not; रणे in the passage of arms; सपत्नान् the enemies; जेतासि you shall conquer; युध्यस्व (therefore) fight.

Do you kill Droṇa and Bhīṣma and Jayadratha and Karṇa and even other brave warriors; who stand already killed by Me; fear not. You will surely conquer the enemies in this war; therefore, fight. (34)

Ācārya Droṇa was a past master in archery and the use of other weapons of war, and was exceptionally proficient in the art of warfare. The tradition was that he could not be slain so long as he carried a weapon in his hand. Arjuna, therefore, looked upon him as invincible; moreover, since Droṇa had been his teacher, Arjuna considered it sinful to kill him. Bhīṣma too was a world-renowned warrior. He had discomfited even an invincible hero like Paraśurāma. Besides this, he had obtained a boon from his father Śāntanu to the effect that Death itself would be powerless to take his life against his will. All these facts had led Arjuna to believe that it was no easy task to conquer Bhīṣma. Moreover, he held it to be a sin to kill the great patriarch with his own hands. On more than one occasions he had expressed his inability to slay Bhīṣma.

Jayadratha* was a great warrior himself, and being a great devotee of Bhagavān Śaṅkara had obtained a rare boon from the latter, which had made him even more difficult to conquer. Having married Duryodhana's sister Duḥśalā, he stood in the relation of a cousin-in-law to the Pāṇḍavas. On account of this natural tie of affection and kinship Arjuna was not inclined to kill him either.

Karṇa too was regarded by Arjuna as in no way inferior to himself as a warrior. It was well-known throughtout the world that Karṇa alone was a suitable match for Arjuna on the field of battle. A great hero and fighter himself, Karṇa had acquired exceptional knowledge of the science of arms from the great Paraśurāma.

By the words 'Anyān Yodhavīrān' the Lord implies heroes like Bhagadatta, Bhūriśravā and Śalya, whom Arjuna looked upon as very great warriors and conquest of whom was no easy job in his eyes. By naming Bhīṣma, Droṇa and others separately and referring to the other warriors in a general way the Lord assured Arjuna that he should not entertain the least doubt

* Jayadratha was the son of the Ruler of Sind, Vṛddhakṣatra by name. He was married to Duḥśalā the only daughter of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Once during the exile of the Pāṇḍavas in the forest, he carried off Draupadī in their absence. When, on their return to the forest abode, Bhīma and his brothers heard about this abduction, they at once followed Jayadratha and freeing Draupadī from his clutches made him a captive. At Yudhiṣṭhira's intervention, however, he was allowed to go after having his head shaved as a mark of punishment. During the Kurukṣetra war, while Arjuna was engaged in a fight with the Saṁsaptakas, Jayadratha detained Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Nakula and Sahadeva at the entrance of the battle-array called Cakravyūha, thus forbidding their entry into the Vyūha and preventing them from bringing succour to Abhimanyu, who was consequently surrounded and killed by a number of warriors. Thereupon Arjuna took a vow that if he failed to kill Jayadratha before sunset the next day, he would end his life by entering a blazling fire. The warriors of the Kaurava army tried their utmost to save Jayadratha, but all their efforts failed due to a clever strategem adopted by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and Arjuna succeeded in severing Jayadratha's head from his trunk before the sun actually went down. Jayadratha was armoured with a boon to the effect that he who dropped his severed head on the ground would have his own head smashed into a hundred pieces that very moment. Therefore, under instructions from Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the friend of His devotees, Arjuna sent the head of Jayadratha flying through the air by his arrows, and dropped it on the lap of Jayadratha's father, Vṛddhakṣatra, who was sitting on the bank of the sacred tank called Samantapañcaka and who had his skull broken into a hundred pieces as soon as his son's head dropped from his lap. *(Mahābhārata Droṇaparva)*

about his victory over any of them, however formidable he may be.

By asking Arjuna not to be frightened at the sight of His dreadful form, the Lord assures him that He was none other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was so dear to him.

Arjuna was not sure whether he would win the war or would be vanquished by the enemy (II.6). In order to remove this doubt from his mind the Lord now makes the categorical statement that victory would be won by the Pāṇḍavas.

Sañjaya now reveals to Dhṛtarāṣṭra Arjuna's reactions to the above exhortation of the Lord and how he responded to the same.

सञ्जय उवाच

एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः किरीटी।
नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य॥ ३५॥

केशवस्य of Keśava (a name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa); एतत् वचनम् this utterance or exhortation; श्रुत्वा hearing; किरीटी Arjuna; कृताञ्जलिः joining his palms; वेपमानः trembling (with fear); नमस्कृत्वा bowing his head; भूयः एव once more; भीतभीतः much terrified; प्रणम्य bowing (again); कृष्णम् to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; सगद्गदम् in faltering accents; आह spoke.

Sañjaya said: Hearing these words of Bhagavān Keśava, Arjuna tremblingly bowed to Him with joined palms, and bowing again in extreme terror spoke to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in faltering accents. (35)

Arjuna was so much upset at the sight of that dreadful form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that even the above words of consolation from the Lord did not assuage his fear, and he addressed the following prayer to the Lord in the same mood of consternation. This is what Sañjaya seeks to convey by the above statement.

Arjuna generally wore on his head a celestial crown (Kirīṭa) as brilliant as the sun; hence he came to be known by the name of 'Kirīṭī.*

Arjuna was filled with great reverence at the sight of that infinitely glorious form of the Lord. It was this feeling which he gave vent to by bowing to Him again and again with joined palms.

The use of the indeclinable 'Bhūyaḥ' shows that even after hearing the above words of consolation from the Lord, Arjuna began to offer his praises to the Lord even as he had done only a few moments back.

When Arjuna commenced once more to offer his praises to the Lord, his heart melted due both to wonder and fear, tears began to flow from his eyes, and his voice was choked with emotion. That is why the words he uttered were indistinct and broken. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the adverbial compound 'Sagadgadam'.

---

* पुरा शक्रेण मे दत्तं युध्यतो दानवर्षभैः। किरीटं मूर्ध्नि सूर्याभं तेनाहुर्मां किरीटिनम्॥

(Mahā., Virā., XL.iv.17)

Arjuna said to Uttara, son of King Virāṭa, "This diadem, possessing the brilliance of the sun was placed on my head by Indra as a token to his pleasure when I fought the great Dānava warriors the other day. That is why people call me by name of Kirīṭī".

Verses 36 to 46 below embody Arjuna's praises, salutations and apologetic prayer to the Lord. Beginning with the word 'Sthāne', Arjuna justifies the exultation of the world.

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च।
रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥ ३६ ॥

हृषीकेश O Kṛṣṇa (*lit.* the inner controller of beings); स्थाने well it is; तव प्रकीर्त्या by chanting Your names, virtues and glory; जगत् the universe; प्रहृष्यति exults; च and; अनुरज्यते is filled with love; भीतानि terrified; रक्षांसि demons; दिशः in all directions; द्रवन्ति are fleeing; च and; सर्वे all; सिद्धसङ्घाः hosts of Siddhas; नमस्यन्ति make obeisance.

Arjuna said: Lord, well it is the universe exults and is filled with love by chanting Your names, virtues and glory; terrified Rākṣasas are fleeing in all directions, and all the hosts of Siddhas are bowing to You. (36)

Here it should be noted that Arjuna alone beheld the Cosmic Body of the Lord with the help of the divine vision granted to him by the Lord Himself, and not the world in which Arjuna stood. Therefore, the exultation etc., of the world, the fleeing of the Rākṣasas in terror and the salutations offered by the Siddhas—all these were parts of the Cosmic Body. That is to say, the description given by Arjuna relates to the Cosmic Body as seen by him, and not to the external world in which Arjuna stood. The Cosmic Body Itself presented all these spectacles to him.

Using the word 'Sthāne' in the preceding verse, Arjuna showed the propriety of the Siddhas offering salutations etc., to the Lord. Establishing the same thing in the next four verses he now offers repeated salutations to the Lord.

कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन् गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे।
अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ॥ ३७ ॥

महात्मन् O great soul; ब्रह्मणः अपि of Brahmā himself; आदिकर्त्रे to the first progenitor; च and; गरीयसे to the greatest of the great; ते they; कस्मात् wherefore; न नमेरन् should not bow; अनन्त O infinite being; देवेश O Lord of celestials; जगन्निवास O abode of the universe; यत् which; सत् (is) existent; असत् nonexistent; तत्परम् (and) beyond both; अक्षरम् the Indestructible (Brahma); त्वम् You (are).

O great soul, why should they not bow to You, who are the progenitor of Brahmā himself and the greatest of the great ? O infinite Lord of celestials, Abode of the universe, You are that which is existent (Sat), that which is non-existent (Asat) and also that which is beyond both, viz., the indestructible Brahma. (37)

By addressing the Lord as 'Mahātman', 'Ananta', 'Deveśa' and 'Jagannivāsa', Arjuna shows that He is the all-pervading soul of all animate and inanimate beings; that His form, virtues and glory etc., are all infinite; that He is the Ruler even of the celestials and that the universe not only exists in Him but is also pervaded by Him. Therefore it is quite in the fitness of things that all beings should offer their salutations to Him.

The adjectives 'Garīyase' and 'Brahmaṇospyādikartre' indicate that He is the progenitor not only of this universe but of Brahmā himself, who created it. Therefore, being the best of all, and the supreme object of their worship, He deserves the homage of all.

The imperishable soul, which never ceases to be, is designated as 'Sat'; while all perishable and transient objects are termed as 'Asat'. It is these which have been referred to as the 'Parā' and 'Aparā' Prakṛtis in Chapter VII and as the 'Akṣara' and 'Kṣara' Puruṣas respectively in Chapter XV. Beyond these two is the supreme Indestructible or God Himself, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. In justification of his offering salutations etc., to the Lord, Arjuna says that they are all identical with the Lord.

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराणस्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप॥ ३८॥

त्वम् You; आदिदेवः (are) the primal deity; पुराणः पुरुषः the most ancient Person; त्वम् You; अस्य विश्वस्य of this universe; परम् निधानम् the ultimate resort; च and; वेत्ता the knower; वेद्यम् the knowable; च and; परम् धाम the supreme Abode; असि are; अनन्तरूप assuming endless forms; त्वया by You; विश्वम् the (entire) universe; ततम् (stands) pervaded.

You are the primal Deity, the most ancient Person; You are the ultimate resort of this universe. You are both the knower and the knowable, and the highest abode. It is You who pervade the universe, assuming endless forms. (38)

By speaking of the Lord as "the ultimate resort of this universe" Arjuna shows that at the time of final dissolution the whole of this universe gets merged into God and ever exists in a fraction of His being.

By referring to the Lord as 'Vettā' (knower), Arjuna indicates that it is He who possesses real and full knowledge of the past, present and future worlds, and is the eternal witness of all. That is why God is omniscient; and there is none who can equal Him in omniscience.

By speaking of the Lord as 'Vedyam', Arjuna indicates that He is the supreme Brahma or God, who is the only object worth knowing, whose knowledge is the highest goal of human existence, and who has been referred to in verses 12 to 17 of Chapter XIII as the object of Knowledge.

By referring to the Lord as 'Param Dhāma', Arjuna shows His identity with the highest abode, which is the final resort of all liberated souls, land attaining which man does not return to the mortal world.

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च।
नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते॥ ३९॥

त्वम् You (are); वायुः Vāyu (the wind-god); यमः Yama (the god of death); अग्निः Agni (the god of fire); वरुणः Varuṇa (the god of water); शशाङ्कः the moon-god; प्रजापतिः the Lord of creation, Brahmā; च and; प्रपितामहः the father even of Brahmā (the grandfather); ते to You; सहस्रकृत्वः a thousand times; नमः obeisance; नमः (further) obeisance; अस्तु let there be; ते to You; भूयः अपि once more; पुनः च repeatedly; नमः obeisance; नमः (further) obeisance.

You are Vāyu (the wind-god), Yama (the god of death), Agni (the god

of fire), the moon-god, Brahmā (the Lord of Creation), nay, the father of Brahmā Himself. Hail, hail to You a thousand times; salutations, repeated salutations to You once again. **(39)**

By identifying the Lord with Vāyu, Yama and other gods Arjuna indicates that in addition to the gods mentioned above all other gods who are worthy of salutation are comprised in God, being fractions of His being. Therefore, He alone is worthy of receiving salutations from all in every respect.

Being the father of Kaśyapa, Dakṣaprajāpati and the seven sages etc., who actually created the whole universe Brahmā is the grandfather of all beings; and the creator of Brahmā is God Himself. Therefore, He is the great-grandfather of all. From this point of view also, He is worthy of receiving salutations from all.

The repeated use of the indeclinable 'Namaḥ' with the adverbial compound 'Sahasrakṛtvaḥ' by Arjuna shows that actuated as he was by the feeling of deep reverence for the Lord mixed with fear, he did not feel tired of bowing to Him, and wanted to go on with his salutations.

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व।
अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥ ४० ॥

अनन्तवीर्य O lord possessing infinite prowess; ते to You; पुरस्तात् from before; अथ as well as; पृष्ठतः from behind; नमः obeisance; सर्व O soul of all; ते to You; सर्वतः from all sides; एव indeed; नमः obeisance; अस्तु let there be; अमितविक्रमः possessing limitless might; त्वम् You; सर्वम् the whole (universe); समाप्नोषि pervade; ततः therefore; सर्वः all; असि You are.

O Lord of infinite prowess, my salutations to You from before and from behind. O soul of all, my obeisance to You from all sides indeed. You, who possess limitless might, pervade all; therefore, You are all. **(40)**

By addressing the Lord as 'Sarva', Arjuna seeks to convey that He is the soul of all, pervades all and is identical with all; no atom of space is devoid of Him. Therefore, it is but natural for Arjuna to offer his salutation from all sides to Him who is present everywhere.

By referring to the Lord as 'Amitavikramaḥ' Arjuna shows that the strength He is capable of exerting is beyond the conception of any mortal.

In the first half of this verse Arjuna has already addressed the Lord as 'Sarva'. In the latter half he establishes His universal character. There is no iota of space where He is not; there is no particle of matter which is not permeated by Him. Therefore, He is all in all. Apart from God the world had no reality whatsoever in the eyes of Arjuna.

Offering praises and salutations to the Lord in the above manner, Arjuna now craves in the following two verses His forgiveness for the offences committed by him through word and deed due to lack of true knowledge about His virtues, mysteries and glory.

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति।
अजानता महिमानं तवेदं मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि ॥ ४१ ॥

**यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु।
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम्॥ ४२॥**

तव Your; इदम् this; महिमानम् greatness; अजानता not knowing; सखा (You are my) friend; इति thus; मत्वा thinking; प्रणयेन through affection; वा or; प्रमादात् through negligence; अपि even; मया by me; हे कृष्ण Ho Kṛṣṇa; हे यादव Ho descendant of Yadu; हे सखे Ho comrade; इति thus; यत् whatever; प्रसभम् importunately; उक्तम् has been said; च and; अच्युत O sinless one; यत् the way in which; अवहासार्थम् for the sake of fun; विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु while at play, reposing, sitting or at meals; एकः alone; अथवा or; तत्समक्षम् in the presence of those (companions); अपि even; असत्कृतः असि You have been slighted (by me); तत् for all that (misdemeanour); अप्रमेयम् त्वाम् from You who are infinite; अहम् I; क्षामये seek forgiveness.

The way in which I have importunately called out, either through intimacy or even through want of thought, "Ho Kṛṣṇa ! Ho Yādava ! Ho Comrade !" and so on, suspecting not this greatness of Yours, and thinking You only to be a friend, and the way in which You have been slighted by me in jest, O sinless one, while at play, reposing, sitting or at meals, either alone or even in the presence of others—for all that I crave forgiveness from You, who are infinite. (41, 42)

The word 'Mahimānaṁ', qualified by the demonstrative adjective 'Idaṁ' refers to the incomparable and boundless glory, greatness, excellence and potency of the Lord, which Arjuna actually saw during his vision of the Cosmic Body.

The participial adjective 'Ajānatā' qualifying the pronoun 'Mayā' is intended as an excuse for the impropriety of behaviour shown by Arjuna towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna thereby claimed that the offences unwittingly committed by him would be forgiven by the Lord.

It was due to his ignorance about the Lord's incomparable and infinite glory that he had treated Him as an equal; and it was therefore that he never paid any regard, during his conversations with the Lord, to His exalted position as the object of universal adoration. This undoubtedly constituted a serious blunder on his part. He treated as an equal one whose feet even the greatest of gods and sages deemed it a privilege to adore ! This is what is sought to be conveyed by the words 'Sakheti Matvā' and 'Pramādāt'.

The familiar forms of address used by Arjuna in respect of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are quoted by him as an instance of the irreverence shown by him towards the latter. Although there was no comparison between him and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was no other than God Himself, he went on foolishly regarding Him as an ordinary friend, and instead of using terms of respect for Him continued to address Him by name in a familiar way. This is what he now repents for.

The word 'Acyuta' stands for one who never falls from his glory and exalted state of being. Addressing the Lord by this name Arjuna indicates that, even though he committed a great offence by insulting Him through his unseemly behaviour, such impropriety of behaviour on his part could not really harm Him in any way. Nothing in the world could shake His position and nobody could ever bring dishonour to Him; for He is always 'Acyuta' or unshaken.

Over and above the instances of impropriety cited in verse 41, Arjuna proceeds in the next verse to mention other forms of objectionable conduct on his part. The

indeclinable 'Yat' has been repeated in the very beginning of verse 42 to introduce these other forms of misdemeanour, and the conjunction 'Ca' is intended to conjoin them with those mentioned in the preceding verse.

Intimacy, thoughtlessness and fun—these are the three factors responsible for lack of regard on the part of an individual for another's honour or dishonour. Intimacy knows no decorum; thoughtlessness naturally contributes to lapses; and it becomes difficult to maintain propriety of speech when one is in a jocular mood. For the disrespect shown to a man worthy of reverence, these three factors may be jointly or individually responsible. Of these three factors, intimacy and thoughtlessness have already been dealt with in the preceding verse; while the present verse points the third factor, *viz.*, fun, by using the adverbial compound 'Avahāsārtham' (for the sake of fun).

A similar expression of regret is attributed to Arjuna in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* as well, where he says:—

"While reposing, sitting, walking, indulging in tall talk or dining with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I had developed such intimacy with Him that occasionally I used to taunt Him saying "O friend, you are indeed a truthful man." But that noble soul out of His inherent greatness overlooked all those faults of mine even as a friend overlooks the faults of his friend, or a father condones the faults of his son."* (I.XV.19)

The demonstrative pronoun "Tat" sums up all the offences of the kind mentioned in verses 41 and 42, and by speaking of the Lord as 'Aprameyam'. Arjuna indicates the inconceivable nature of His form and glory. In fact, no one can apprehend them fully. What little knowledge about Him is possessed by anyone is wholly attributable to His grace. It was due to His supreme grace that Arjuna, who had been ignorant of His greatness so long and consequently behaved disrespectfully towards Him, had come to realize His glory to a certain extent. Even then it could not be asserted that He had known it fully. Far from knowing it fully he had not yet apprehended even that much of His glory which the divine grace sought to bring home to him. But what little he had understood had fully convinced him that He was God almighty Himself. He had now come to realize that the way in which he had behaved with the Lord treating Him as his equal, was unseemly on his part, and he humbly sought His pardon for all his past misbehaviour.

Having thus craved the indulgence of the Lord, Arjuna proceeds to describe His glory in the next two verses, establishing thereby His capacity to forgive him, and invokes His favour once more.

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान्।
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥ ४३ ॥

त्वम् You; अस्य चराचरस्य लोकस्य of this moving and unmoving creation; पिता the father; गरीयान् गुरुः the greatest teacher; च and; पूज्यः worthy of adoration; असि are; अप्रतिमप्रभाव O Lord of incomparable might; लोकत्रये in (all) the three worlds; त्वत्समः Your equal; अपि even; अन्यः another; न not; अस्ति there is; अभ्यधिकः any better; कुतः how (then).

---

* शय्यासनाटनविकत्थनभोजनादिष्वैक्याद् वयस्य ऋतवानिति विप्रलब्धः।
सख्युः सखेव पितृवत्तनयस्य सर्वं सेहे महान् महितया कुमतेरघं मे॥

You are the Father, nay, the greatest teacher of this moving and unmoving creation, and worthy of adoration. O Lord of incomparable might, in all the three worlds there is none else even equal to You; how, then, any better ? (43)

By speaking of the Lord as "the Father of this creation, the greatest teacher and worthy of adoration", Arjuna seeks to justify his claim for forgiveness. The whole of this universe has sprung from the Lord; therefore, He is its Father. Of all great gods, sages and other powerful beings Brahmā is the greatest; for he is the first born of this creation, and it is he who teaches all according to their respective capacity through the eternal light of God. But Brahmā himself takes his descent from God and it is from Him, again that he derives his wisdom. Therefore, He is the greatest of all beings, greater than the greatest, and the only and the great teacher of all. Even gods like Brahmā and sages like Vasiṣṭha, who are objects of supreme adoration and ever worthy of salutation even for the gods and sages that are worshipped by the world, deem it a proud privilege to obtain even a moment's opportunity to offer direct worship or praises to Him. Therefore, He is the supreme object of worship even for all adorable beings, and it is quite natural for Arjuna to expect that He should condone his faults.

By the second half of this verse Arjuna shows that in the whole universe there is none who can even approach the infinite and inconceivable virtues, glory and greatness of God. God alone is His own compeer. And when there is none equal to Him, the possibility of anyone surpassing Him cannot even be conceived. If, therefore, the Lord, who was all compassion, did not forgive his faults, there could be no hope of his being pardoned by anyone else.

तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम्।
पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम्॥ ४४॥

तस्मात् therefore; अहम् I; कायम् (my) body; प्रणिधाय prostrating (at Your feet); प्रणम्य bowing (to You); ईड्यम् worthy of praise; त्वाम् ईशम् You, the Ruler of all; प्रसादये seek to propitiate; देव O Lord; पिता a father; पुत्रस्य with (his) son; इव as; सखा a friend; सख्युः with (his) friend; इव as; प्रियः a husband; प्रियायाः (as) with (his) beloved spouse; सोढुम् to bear; अर्हसि You ought.

Therefore, Lord, prostrating my body at Your feet and bowing low I seek to propitiate You, the ruler of all and worthy of all praise. It behoves You to bear with me even as a father bears with his son, a friend with his friend and a husband with his beloved spouse. (44)

The word 'Tasmāt' refers to the exalted virtues of the Lord, mentioned in the preceding verse, which render Him easy to placate. In other words, the incomparable greatness and glory possessed by the Lord were such as made it incumbent on Him to take pity on, and be favourably disposed towards, a distressed soul like Arjuna, who had taken shelter under Him. That is why Arjuna took courage to seek His forgiveness with all humility.

By referring to the Lord as 'Īśam' and 'Īḍyam' Arjuna seeks to convey that He is the sole and supreme Ruler of all, who not only regulates the whole universe, but is the ruler and controller even of gods like Indra

(the Lord of paradise), Āditya (the sun-god), Varuṇa (the god of water), Kubera (the god of riches) and Yama (the god of death), who are the guardians of the world. And the extent of His virtues, glory and greatness is so vast that even if the whole universe goes on singing His praises for ever their limit cannot be reached. Hence He alone is the worthy of praise. Arjuna felt that he had neither adequate knowledge nor the requisite eloquence whereby he could sing His praises and win His favour. He felt utterly incompetent to praise Him. He thought whatever words he would utter in praise of His glory would fail to touch even the fringe of that glory, and would thus detract from the same. Hence the only course left to him was to throw himself at His feet like a log of wood, *i.e.*, bow to Him with all his limbs, and seek His favour through the grace of the dust of His feet. That is how Arjuna invoked His favour and asked Him to overlook his faults.

It has already been shown in verses 41 and 42 above that thoughtlessness, intimacy and fun are the three factors which jointly or severally contribute to an offence of slight. By citing the examples of father and son, friend and friend, and husband and wife, Arjuna requests the Lord to condone all his lapses attributable to any of the three causes mentioned above. That is to say, just as a father forgives the fault of his son committed out of ignorance and thoughtlessness, a friend puts up with the indignities heaped on him by his friend in a spirit of fun, and a husband condones the lapses of his wife occasioned by intimacy, Arjuna expects the Lord to forgive all his faults proceeding from the three causes mentioned above.

Craving the indulgence of the Lord for his trespasses in this way, Arjuna requests Him in the next two verses to reveal His four-armed form.

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे।
तदेव मे दर्शय देवरूपं प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास॥ ४५॥

अदृष्टपूर्वम् (Yours wondrous form) never seen before; दृष्ट्वा seeing; हृषितः delighted; अस्मि I am; च and; मे my; मनः mind; भयेन by fear; प्रव्यथितम् is tormented; तत् that; देवरूपम् four-armed divine form (of Viṣṇu); एव only; मे to me; दर्शय (pray) reveal; देवेश O Lord of celestials; जगन्निवास O Abode of the universe; प्रसीद be gracious.

Having Seen Your wondrous form, which was never seen before, I feel transported with joy; at the same time my mind is tormented by fear. Pray reveal to me that divine form; the form of Viṣṇu with four arms; O Lord of celestials, Abode of the universe, be gracious. (45)

By the first half of this verse Arjuna points to the alternate feelings of joy and fear aroused in him by the sight of that wondrous form. When he looked to the virtues, glory and greatness of the Lord as revealed in His Cosmic Body, his joy knew no bounds and he congratulated himself on the infinite compassion and unparalleled love shown to him by the Lord in revealing His transcendent form. But the very next moment, when he became conscious of the dreadfulness of that form, he trembled with fear, and felt much perturbed.

The above statement of Arjuna is significant. He thereby humbly requests the Lord to withdraw that form from before his eyes as speedily as possible.

The demonstrative adjective 'Tat' points

to something out of sight. It further denotes that which has been seen before, but is now out of sight. And the use of the indeclinable 'Eva' has a restrictive force. The compound word 'Devarūpam', qualified by 'Tat', therefore, refers to the four-armed divine form of Viṣṇu residing in Vaikuṇṭha. If the word 'Tat' alone occurred in the verse, it could be interpreted as referring to the human garb in which the Lord appeared before Arjuna. But the word 'Deva' joined to 'Rūpam' makes it clear that the form referred to here was other than human *i.e.*, belonging to the heaven world.

By addressing the Lord as 'Deveśa' and 'Jagannivāsa' Arjuna shows that He was none else than the all-pervading Lord of the universe. Hence He alone could reveal that divine Form to Him.

By asking the Lord to be gracious, Arjuna solicits Him to withdraw speedily the dreadful Cosmic Form and be pleased to reveal before him the four-armed divine form.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्तमिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव।
तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन सहस्त्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते॥ ४६॥

अहम् I; तथा एव even so; त्वाम् You; किरीटिनम् adorned with a diadem; गदिनम् armed with a club; चक्रहस्तम् (and) holding a discus in one of Your hands; द्रष्टुम् to see; इच्छामि desire; विश्वमूर्ते O Universal Being; सहस्त्रबाहो O Lord with a thousand arms; तेन चतुर्भुजेन रूपेण in that four-armed form; एव alone; भव do You appear.

I wish to see You adorned in the same way with a diadem on the head, and holding a mace and a discus in two of Your hands. O Lord with a thousand arms, O Universal Being, appear again in the same four-armed Form. (46)

The Lord had taken a vow not to take up arms during the Mahābhārata war, and He was seated in Arjuna's chariot holding a whip in one hand and the reins in another. But, before seeing Him in the two-armed human form once more, Arjuna wanted to behold His four-armed divine form holding weapons of war like the mace and the discus. This is what he seeks to convey by the use of the indeclinables 'Tathā' and 'Eva'.

The word 'Rūpeṇa', qualified by the demonstrative adjective 'Tena', refers to the four-armed divine form mentioned in the preceding verse by the words 'Tat', 'Rūpam'. The use of the indeclinable 'Eva' in this verse indicates that even though Arjuna was generally wont to see the two-armed human form of the Lord, he now longed to see the four-armed divine form alone.

The four-armed form, referred to in this verse, means the divine form of Viṣṇu. The following are our reasons for holding this view:—

(1) If the four-armed form were the natural form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it was needless to speak of It as holding a mace and a discuss in two of Its hands; for Arjuna used constantly to see that form. Nay, even the use of the word 'Caturbhujena' with reference to it would have been redundant. It would have been quite enough for Arjuna to request the Lord to reveal the form which has been before him only a few minutes back.

(2) The word 'Devarūpam' (divine form), occurring in the preceding verse, bears a contrast with the word 'Mānuṣam Rūpam' (human form) used in verse 51 below. This further proves that the word

'Devarūpam' refers to Viṣṇu.

(3) The use of the indeclinable 'Bhūyaḥ' with the words 'Svakam Rūpam' in verse 50 below and that of 'Punaḥ' with 'Saumyavapuḥ' also proves that the Lord first revealed His four-armed divine form, and thereafter His two-armed human form.

(4) The use of the adjective 'Sudurdarśam' in verse 52 below shows that the form under question was something exceptionally rare; and the same verse further adds that even gods were always eager to behold that Form. If the four-armed form were natural to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, It would have been open to the perception even of human beings; why should the gods, in that case, be ever eager to see that Form ? If, on the other hand, it is urged that the words 'Idam Rūpam' occurring in verse 50 below refer to the Cosmic Body, such a terrible form was even beyond the conception of gods. Thus it is clear that it is that form of Viṣṇu residing in Vaikuṇṭha that the gods are ever eager to behold.

(5) The Cosmic Body has been glorified in verse 48 below, beginning with the words 'Na Vedayajñādhyayanaiḥ' (I cannot be perceived through the study of Vedas or rituals etc.). The same idea has been repeated in verse 53, beginning with 'Nāham Vedairna Tapasā' (Neither through study of the Vedas nor through penance etc., can I be seen in this Form). Construing both these verses as glorifying the Cosmic Body would expose the Lord to the charge of tautology. This as well proves that before revealing the human form the Lord appeared before Arjuna in the four-armed divine form, and that verse 53 was uttered in praise of the same.

(6) In verse 24 of this chapter, and again in verse 30, Arjuna addresses the Lord as 'Viṣṇu'. This also indicates Arjuna's longing to see the Lord in the form of Viṣṇu.

All these arguments go to prove that Arjuna solicits the Lord in the present verse to show him the four-armed form of Viṣṇu.

By addressing the Lord as 'Sahasrabāho' (possessed of a thousand arms) and 'Viśvamūrte' (Universal Being), Arjuna requests Him to withdraw His Universal Form.

Revealing in the next two verses the glory of His Cosmic Body and the rarity of its perception, the Lord consoles Arjuna in verse 49 and invites him to behold the four-armed form as requested above.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात्।
तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम्॥ ४७॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; प्रसन्नेन pleased (with you); मया by Me; आत्मयोगात् through My own power of Yoga; इदम् this; मे Mine; परम् supreme; तेजोमयम् effulgent; आद्यम् primal; अनन्तम् (and) infinite; विश्वम् रूपम् Cosmic Body; तव to you; दर्शितम् has been shown; यत् which; त्वदन्येन by anyone else than you; न दृष्टपूर्वम् was never seen before.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna ! pleased with you I have shown you, through My own power of Yoga, this supreme, effulgent, primal and infinite Cosmic Body, which was never seen before by anyone else than you. (47)

The use of the adjective 'Prasannena' with 'Mayā' shows that the devotion Arjuna bore towards the Lord and the fervent prayer that he addressed to Him in verses 3 and

4 above had moved His heart, and it was with a view to enlightening him about His own virtues, glory and truth that He had mercifully shown His transcendent form to him. Under such circumstances, Arjuna had no cause for fear, agony or bewilderment. The Lord, therefore, wondered why he should be so much perturbed with fear.

The compound word 'Ātmayogāt' denotes that the Cosmic Body of the Lord could not be perceived by all and at all times. It could be seen only when He vouchsafed its vision through His own power of Yoga, and by him alone who is gifted with the divine eye, and by none else. Thus it was a great privilege to obtain a vision of that form.

The use of the adjectives 'Idam', 'Param', 'Tejomayam', 'Ādyam', 'Anantam' and 'Viśvam' with the substantive 'Rūpam' is intended to bring home to Arjuna the greatness of His transcendent and wonderful Cosmic Body. The Lord thus told Arjuna that the form in which He appeared before him was most excellent and divine in character; it was an infinite mass of divine lustre, the beginning and creator of all, and boundless in extent; its limit could not be found anywhere. What Arjuna saw was not a complete picture. It was only a fragment of that great Form.

There was a world of difference between the Cosmic forms revealed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to mother Yaśodā in His own mouth and to Bhīṣma and others in the court of the Kauravas, on the one hand, and the Cosmic Body revealed on this occasion to Arjuna, on the other. All these three forms have been described differently in our sacred books. In the form revealed to Arjuna Bhīṣma, Droṇa and the other heroes were seen entering the flaming mouths of the Lord. Such a Cosmic form was never shown by the Lord to anyone before. Thus there is no incongruity in the above statement of the Lord.

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानैर्न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः ।
एवंरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥ ४८ ॥

कुरुप्रवीर O great hero of the Kuru race; नृलोके in (this) world of human beings; एवंरूपः assuming such as a (cosmic) form; अहम् I; न neither; वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैः through study of the Vedas or of rituals; न nor; दानैः through gifts; न nor again; क्रियाभिः through actions (enjoined by the Śāstras); च and; न nor; उग्रः तपोभिः through austere penances; त्वदन्येन by anyone else than you; द्रष्टुम् शक्यः am capable of being seen.

Arjuna, in this mortal world I cannot be seen in this Form by anyone else than you, either through study of the Vedas or of rituals, or a gain through gifts, actions or austere penances. (48)

Study of the Vedas with all the supplementary sciences and other auxiliary branches of Knowledge under a qualified teacher well-versed in the Vedic lore, and thoroughly grasping their meaning is called 'Vedādhyayana.' Even so receiving instruction in the various rituals from teachers skilled in the performance of sacrifices, and acquiring practical knowledge of the same by attending sacrifices performed with due ceremony under the supervision of such teachers is known as 'Yajñādhyayana'.

'Dāna' consists in gifting to another, with due regard to the latter's qualifications, one's wealth or other possessions, food, water, knowledge, cattle, land etc., with a

cheerful heart for the recipient's benefit and enjoyment.

Performing sacrifices enjoined by the Vedas and Smṛti texts, and all other pursuits sanctioned by the scriptures and followed for the sake of discharging one's duty as prescribed by one's Varṇa or grade in society and Āśrama or stage in life are covered by the term 'Kriyā'.

Observing fasts recommended in the Śāstras under the name of 'Kṛcchra' and 'Cāndrāyaṇa' etc., and other stringent rules of life, subduing the mind and senses with strong determination and reason, undergoing severe bodily and mental suffering for the sake of one's duty, and various other forms of askesis undertaken in accordance with the scriptural ordinance—all these are included under the category of 'austere penances.'

Declaring that it was impossible to obtain a vision of His Cosmic Body through the above practices, and thereby revealing its transcendent glory the Lord congratulates Arjuna on his being able, through His own grace and goodwill, to behold the Form which could not be seen by any other means. The feelings of fear, agony and bewilderment etc., obsessing Arjuna's mind at that moment were, therefore, altogether, inopportune and unjustified.

Man alone is qualified to study the Vedas and rituals, practise charity, perform penance and undertake various other forms of activities. And it is through the human body alone that one acquires various other qualifications by performing fresh actions of various kinds. The other worlds of the universe are primarily places where one works out one's destiny. The use of the word 'Nṛloke' is intended to bring out this glory of the mortal world. The intention is to point out that when that Form of the Lord cannot be seen by anybody through such practices even in this world, much less can it be seen in the other worlds without such practices.

By addressing Arjuna as 'Kurupravīra' the Lord shows that Arjuna was the greatest hero of the Kuru race, and it was unbecoming of a hero like him to be overcome with fear. This was another reason why he should not give way to fear.

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृङ्ममेदम्।
व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥ ४९ ॥

मम Mine; ईदृक् such as this; इदम् this; घोरम् terrible; रूपम् form; दृष्ट्वा seeing; ते to you; व्यथा perturbation; मा let there not be; च and; विमूढभावः perplexity (too); मा there should not be; त्वम् you; व्यपेतभीः freed from fear; प्रीतमनाः (and) delighted at heart; तत् एव that very; मे Mine; इदम् this (four-armed); रूपम् form; पुनः again; प्रपश्य behold.

Seeing such a dreadful Form of Mine as this, be not perturbed or perplexed; with a fearless and complacent mind, behold once again the same four-armed Form of Mine (bearing the conch, discus, mace and lotus). (49)

By the first half of this verse the Lord indicates that the sight of the Cosmic Body, which was so difficult to obtain, and which had been vouchsafed to Arjuna as mark of His pleasure, should not have caused perplexity and perturbation to Arjuna. Nevertheless, when that dreadful vision was proving a source of fear and bewilderment to him, and he desired that He should withdraw that form from before his eyes, the Lord was willing to meet his wishes in the matter and conceal the terrible form just

for his consolation. Arjuna need not, therefore, feel perturbed or perplexed any more.

When the Lord was thus going to withdraw the form which caused fear and bewilderment to Arjuna, and reveal the four-armed form coveted by him, he should shake off all fear and cheer up. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the adjectives 'Vyapetabhīḥ' and 'Prītamanāḥ'.

The use of the demonstrative adjectives 'Tat' and 'Idam' with the substantive 'Rūpam' is intended to show that Arjuna had now before his eyes and could very well see the four-armed divine form which had been shown to him before, and for a vision of which he was now praying to the Lord. In other words, the Cosmic Body had disappeared from his view and had been replaced by the four-armed divine form. The Lord, therefore, invited Arjuna to drive out fear from his mind and behold His four-armed form with a complacent mind.

The word 'Punaḥ' used in the verse conveys the impression that the Lord had revealed His four-armed form of Arjuna on a previous occasion as well. The use of the words 'Tat Eva' and 'Tena Eva' occurring in his prayer contained in verses 45 and 46 above go to confirm this view.

Sañjaya now tells Dhṛtarāṣṭra what Śrī Kṛṣṇa did after inviting Arjuna to behold His four-armed Form.

सञ्जय उवाच

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।
आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ॥ ५० ॥

वासुदेवः Śrī Kṛṣṇa (son of Vasudeva); अर्जुनम् to Arjuna; इति thus; उक्त्वा having spoken; भूयः again; तथा in the same way; स्वकम् रूपम् His own (four-armed) form; दर्शयामास revealed; च and; पुनः once more; महात्मा the high-souled Śrī Kṛṣṇa; सौम्यवपुः भूत्वा assuming a gentle form; भीतम् एनम् the frightened Arjuna; आश्वासयामास brought relief to.

Sañjaya said: Having spoken thus to Arjuna, Bhagavān Vāsudeva again showed to him in the same way His own four-armed Form; and then, assuming a gentle form, the high-souled Śrī Kṛṣṇa consoled the frightened Arjuna. (50)

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested Himself in this world as a son of Vasudeva, and He resides in the heart of all beings as their very self. Therefore, He bears the title of Vāsudeva as one of His many appellations.

'Svakam Rūpam' means one's own form. Speaking in a wider sense, even the Cosmic Body belonged to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself and was thus His own body; even so the human garb in which He was ever present before all was equally His. But the use of the adjective 'Svakam' with 'Rūpam' must have been intended to refer to a third form, different from the two forms mentioned above. For the Cosmic Body was already present before Arjuna; and since he was feeling perturbed at the sight of that form, its revelation before him was altogether out of question at that moment. And with regard to the human form it was unnecessary to say that the Lord manifested it (Darśayāmāsa). For once the Cosmic Body was withdrawn from his view, the Lord's natural form as a human being would have automatically appeared before Arjuna. There could be no question of showing it; for

Arjuna would have himself seen that form. The use of the adjective 'Svakam' with 'Rūpam', and of the verb 'Darśayāmāsa', therefore, conveys the impression that it was the Lord's divine four-armed form eternally residing in Vaikuṇṭha, as distinguished from the human form which was present before all and had been manifested for the sake of carrying on His human sports, as well as from the Cosmic Body manifested through His power of Yoga, which Arjuna longed to see and which the Lord now revealed to him.

He whose self or personality is great is called a Mahātmā. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the soul of all beings, hence He is spoken of as a Mahātmā. The word 'Śaumyavapuḥ' refers to the most pleasing and placid human form, the swarthy form in which Śrī Kṛṣṇa always appeared before all.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, having withdrawn His Cosmic Body and revealed His four-armed form, finally assumed His natural human form and soothed Arjuna, the latter returned to his normal self and said:—

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन।
इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः॥५१॥

जनार्दन O Kṛṣṇa; तव Yours; इदम् this; सौम्यम् placid; मानुषम् रूपम् human form; दृष्ट्वा seeing; इदानीम् now; सचेताः composed; संवृत्तः (I have) become; प्रकृतिम् to (my) normal self; गतः अस्मि I have returned.

Arjuna said: Kṛṣṇa, seeing this gentle human form of Yours I have regained my composure and am myself again. (51)

The Lord's human form was exceptionally lovely, attractive and gentle; and the 'gentle form' mentioned in the preceding verse also referred to His human form. It was with the intention of bringing out this idea that the adjectives 'Saumyam' and 'Mānuṣam' have been used with the substantive 'Rūpam' in the present verse.

The sight of the Lord's Cosmic Body had aroused in the mind of Arjuna morbid feelings like fear, agony and bewilderment etc. The use of the phrases 'Sacetāḥ Saṁvṛttaḥ' and 'Prakṛtim Gataḥ' indicates the disappearance of those feelings. The intention is to show that the sight of the enchanting and lovely human form had restored his mental equilibrium. And morbidities like fear, excitement and shivering etc., which had taken possession of his mind, senses and body respectively, having now left him, he had recovered his normal state.

Hearing the above words of Arjuna the Lord now reveals in two verses the rarity of vision and glory of His four-armed divine form.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम।
देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः॥५२॥

मम Mine; यत् which; रूपम् (four-armed) form; दृष्टवान् असि you have (just) seen; इदम् that; सुदुर्दर्शम् (is) most difficult to perceive; देवाः gods; अपि even; नित्यम् ever; अस्य रूपस्य of this form; दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः (are) eager to behold.

Śrī Bhagavān said: This form of Mine (with four arms) which you have just seen is exceedingly difficult to perceive. Even the gods are always eager to behold this form. (52)

The demonstrative adjective 'Idam' points to an object near at hand; hence in the present context it refers to the four-armed form manifested after the disappearance of the Cosmic Body. By speaking of it as most difficult to perceive, the Lord seeks to convey that the eternal four-armed form existing beyond Māyā and adorned with divine attributes, which Arjuna saw only a few minutes back, could be perceived only by one who is exclusively devoted to the Lord and on whom the divine grace fully shines.

The use of the indeclinable 'Api' after 'Devāḥ' is intended to convey that when gods themselves are always yearning to behold that form, and yet all of them are unable to see it, it is much more difficult for ordinary human beings to perceive it.

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया।
शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा॥ ५३॥

यथा as; माम् Me; दृष्टवान् असि you have seen; एवंविधः endowed with such a form; अहम् I; न neither; वेदैः by the Vedas; न nor; तपसा by penance; न nor (again); दानेन by charity; च and; न nor (even); इज्यया by ritual; द्रष्टुम् शक्यः (am) capable of being seen.

Neither by study of the Vedas nor by penance, nor again by charity, nor even by ritual can I be seen in this form (with four arms) as you have seen Me. (53)

In verse 27 and 28 of Chapter IX the Lord invited Arjuna to dedicate to Him whatever he offered as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever he bestowed as a gift and whatever he did by way of penance, assuring him that he would thereby be freed from the bonds of Karma and attain Him. Again, We are told in XVII.25 that the seekers of liberation perform acts of sacrifice, penance and charity without seeking any return. This leads to the conclusion that the performance of sacrifices, charity, and austere penance are positively conducive to liberation and God-realization. In the present verse, however, the Lord says that His four-armed divine form can be seen neither by study of the Vedas nor by penance, nor again by charity, nor even by ritual. Although these statements appear as mutually contradictory, there is really no contradiction between them; for offering of actions to God is a part of the practice of exclusive devotion. While discussing the subject of exclusive devotion in verse 55 below, the Lord Himself speaks of the devotee as 'Matkarmakṛt' (performing actions for My sake); whereas in verse 54 He proclaims in unequivocal terms that through single-minded devotion He can be seen in His four-armed divine form, known in essence and even entered into. Thus it should be definitely understood that actions such as the performance of sacrifices, charity and penance, carried on in a disinterested spirit for the sake of God and as an offering to God, being parts of devotion, are conducive to God-realization; and not those performed

with an interested motive. That is to say, actions such as the performance of sacrifices, penance etc., mentioned above cannot by themselves lead to God-perception. God-vision is vouchsafed only through His grace by lovingly surrendering oneself to Him in a disinterested spirit.

The present verse cannot be taken to refer to the Cosmic Body inasmuch as the same has already been glorified in almost identical words in verse 48. Hence to interpret the present verse also as uttered in praise of the Cosmic Body would be exposing the Lord to the charge of tautology. Moreover, with regard to the Cosmic Body it has been declared by the Lord that it could not be seen by anyone else than Arjuna; whereas He goes on to suggest the means of perceiving the form under reference in the following verse. Therefore, the way in which we have interpreted the present verse is fully justified.

Having discarded the means by which He could not be perceived, the Lord now suggests the means by which He can be directly perceived.

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परन्तप॥ ५४॥

तु but; परन्तप O scorcher of enemies; अर्जुन O Arjuna; अनन्यया भक्त्या through exclusive devotion; एवंविधः endowed with such a form; अहम् I; द्रष्टुम् of being (actually) seen; च and; तत्त्वेन ज्ञातुम् being known in essence; च and; प्रवेष्टुम् being entered into; शक्यः (am) capable.

Through single-minded devotion, however, I can be seen in this form (with four arms); nay, known in essence and even entered into, O valiant Arjuna. (54)

Developing exclusive love for God and devoting once for all one's mind, senses, body, wealth and all other worldly possessions and even one's own dear and near ones entirely to His service, regarding them as belonging to Him, is what is spoken of here as 'single-minded devotion'. It has been dealt with at length in the following verse while discussing the marks of devotees possessed of such devotion.

It may be contended here that Sāṅkhyayoga or the Path of Knowledge too has been declared elsewhere as leading to God-realization. How, then, can it be said that exclusive devotion is the only means of perceiving, knowing and entering into God ? Our reply to this contention is that the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga has been declared as a means of realizing the attributeless Brahma or the Absolute; and this is wholly true. But it cannot be maintained that the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga will bring one face to face with the divine four-armed form of God-endowed with attributes. For God is not bound to appear in an embodied form before one who treads the path of knowledge. Again, perception of God with attributes is the subject that is being discussed in these verses. Hence it is but reasonable to speak of single-minded devotion as the only means of attaining God-vision etc.

Perception and Knowledge of, and absorption into, God having been declared as easily attainable through single-minded devotion, one is naturally inclined to ask: What is single-minded devotion ? Anticipating this question the Lord now proceeds to discuss the marks of one who is possessed of such devotion.

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः।
निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव॥ ५५॥

पाण्डव O son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; यः who; मत्कर्मकृत् (is) given to performing all his duties only for My sake; मत्परमः (is) dependent on Me; मद्भक्तः (is) devoted to Me; सङ्गवर्जितः (is) free from attachment; सर्वभूतेषु towards all beings; निर्वैरः (is) free from malice; सः he (the man possessed of exclusive devotion); माम् Me; एति reaches.

Arjuna, he who performs all his duties for My sake, depends on Me, is devoted to Me; has no attachment, and is free from malice towards all beings, reaches Me. (55)

He who has renounced all forms of selfishness, the sense of possession and attachment, and regarding everything a belonging to God, and himself as a mere Instrument, carries on all his duties such as the performance of sacrifices, charity, penance and all bodily functions and worldly transactions in a disinterested spirit only for the pleasure of God and according to His commands, is referred to here as 'Matkarmakṛt'.

'Matparamaḥ' is he who looks upon God alone as his supreme refuge and highest goal, the only object worthy of being approached for protection, the best of all beings, all-sustaining and all-powerful, the universal friend, nay, his dearest and nearest one and all-in-all, and always takes every dispensation of God most cheerfully.

Again, a devotee of God is he who, having developed exclusive love for Him, remains absorbed in Him, and is ever uninterruptedly engaged in hearing, chanting and reflecting on His name, form, virtues, glory and stories etc., and knows no peace without these practices even for a moment, and is ever most eagerly looking forward to a vision of God.

The term 'Saṅgavarjitaḥ' refers to him who is entirely free from attachment for all objects of enjoyment of this world and the next, e.g., body, wife, children, home, wealth, family, honour, fame and heavenly bliss etc., and has no love whatsoever for anything else than God.

He who being armed with the conviction that all living beings are but manifestation of God, or that God alone pervades them all, conceives no hatred for anyone even on receiving the worst treatment from others is referred to here as free from malice towards all.

The pronouns 'Yaḥ' and 'Saḥ' refer to an individual possessing single-minded devotion to God as defined in the above verse. And attaining God here means obtaining a vision of God with attributes, knowing Him in essence, and entering into Him as mentioned in the preceding verse.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विश्वरूपदर्शनयोगो
नामैकादशोऽध्यायः॥ ११॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the eleventh chapter entitled "The Yoga of Vision of the Cosmic Body".

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter XII

The twelfth chapter of the Gītā deals with Devotion to God along with various forms of spiritual discipline and discusses the marks of devotees. It begins and ends with devotion. Only three verses of this chapter are devoted to a discussion of the discipline of Knowledge, and that too as a part of the discussion on devotion. That is why this chapter has been given the title of "The Yoga of Devotion".

Title of the Chapter

The chapter opens with a question from Arjuna as to which of the two is superior—the worshipper of God with form and attributes or the worshipper of the formless and attributeless Brahma. Verse 2 contains the Lord's reply to above question, declaring the worshipper of God with form and attributes as superior. The third and fourth describe the characteristics of the formless and attributeless Brahma and declare that worship of the Absolute also leads to the realization of God; while verse 5 shows that worship of the Unmanifest is difficult for one who is centred in the body. The sixth and seventh contain the assurance of the Lord that He personally comes to the rescue of the devotee who, surrendering all actions to Him, constantly and exclusively thinks of Him. In verse 8 The Lord commands Arjuna to surrender his mind and intellect to Him, assuring him that he will thereby realize Him. Thereafter, from the ninth to the eleventh, He successively exhorts Arjuna to practise concentration of mind, or, in the event of his failure to surrender his mind and intellect, to work for His sake, or to relinquish the fruit of all actions if he finds himself unable to work for His sake. Verse 12 declares renunciation of the fruit of action as the best form of discipline and as immediately leading to the attainment of lasting peace. Thereafter, from the thirteenth to the nineteenth the Lord discusses the marks of His beloved, enlightened and saintly devotees; whereas in the last or twentieth verse He declares those Sādhakas as extremely dear to Him, who hold such enlightened devotees as their model and reverently follow in their footsteps.

Summary of the Chapter

From Chapter II right up to the end of Chapter XI the Lord glorifies at various places the worship of God with form and attributes. Chapters VII to XI, among others, specially bring out the glory and importance of such worship. Side by side with this, verses 17 to 26 of Chapter V, verses 24 to 29 of Chapter VI, verses 11 to 13 of Chapter VIII and many other verses besides these show the importance of the worship of the formless and attributeless Brahma. Finally, declaring God-realization as the reward of exclusive devotion to God with form and attributes towards the end of

Link of the Discourse

Chapter XI, the Lord paid a special tribute in the concluding verse of that chapter to him who is devoted to such a God. This raised the question in Arjuna's mind as to which of the two is better—the worshipper of the formless and attributeless Brahma, or the worshipper of God with form and attributes. Accordingly Arjuna put the following question to the Lord:—

अर्जुन उवाच

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः॥ १॥

ये who; भक्ताः loving devotees; एवम् in the aforesaid manner; सततयुक्ताः constantly engaged (in adoring and meditating on You); त्वाम् You (i.e., God with attributes); च and; ये who; अक्षरम् अव्यक्तम् the indestructible Unmanifest Brahma (who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified); अपि alone; पर्युपासते worship (as the supreme Reality); तेषाम् of both these (types of worshippers); योगवित्तमाः the best knowers of Yoga; के who (are).

Arjuna said: The devotees who, with their minds constantly fixed on You as shown above, adore You as possessed of form and attributes, and those who adore as the supreme Reality only the indestructible unmanifest Brahma (who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified)—of these two types of worshippers who are the best knowers of Yoga ? (1)

The indeclinable 'Evam' refers to the process of single-minded devotion described in verse 55 of the preceding chapter.

The personal pronoun 'Tvām', though obviously referring in this verse to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, should be interpreted in a wider sense as covering the various embodied forms assumed by God during His various descents on earth, as well as the form in which He ever resides in His divine abode, and which people represent in various forms and call by various names according to their own respective persuasion and belief; for all those forms are identical with Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Constantly meditating on such a personal God and devoting all one's senses to His service with supreme faith and love and in a disinterested spirit, this is what is meant by adoring Him as a supreme Reality while remaining constantly engaged in His thought.

The words 'Avyaktam', qualified by the adjective 'Akṣaram', evidently stands here for the formless and attributeless Brahma, who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified. Even though the Jīvātmā or the individual soul can also be referred to as 'Akṣara' and 'Avyakta' such an interpretation of these terms is not intended by Arjuna; for the worshipper of the Jīvātmā cannot possibly be superior to the worshipper of God with attributes, and nowhere in the foregoing verses does the Lord prescribe the worship of the individual soul.

Although the worshippers of both the qualified and absolute aspects of God are noble and praiseworthy in the eyes of Arjuna, he is anxious to know the relative worth and excellence of the two types of worshippers. This is what he seeks to elicit from the Lord through the above question.

In reply to the above question of Arjuna, the Lord gives His verdict in favour of the worshippers of God with form and attributes.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः॥ २॥

मयि on Me; मनः the mind; आवेश्य focussing; नित्ययुक्ताः constantly engaged (in adoring and meditating on Me); ये who; परया श्रद्धया with supreme faith; उपेताः endowed; माम् Me, (i.e., God with attributes); उपासते worship; ते they; मे by Me; युक्ततमाः the best of all Yogīs; मताः are considered.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I consider them to be the best Yogīs, who endowed with supreme faith, and ever united through meditation with Me, worship Me with the mind centred on Me. (2)

Like the celebrated cowherd damsels of Vraja, a devotee has his mind absorbed in God almighty, who is the supreme object of love, the inner controller of all and the repository of all virtues, and is ever engaged in loving meditation on His virtues, glory and essence even while attending to his daily round of activities.* This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

Accepting with reverence, as more than evident, the existence of God, His various descents, His utterances, power, virtues, glory, sports and greatness etc., is what is known as supreme faith; and he who cultivates absolute dependence on God like the great devotee Prahlāda is said to be 'endowed with supreme faith'.

The adjective 'Yuktatamāḥ' is a synonym of the word 'Yogavittamāḥ' (knowers of Yoga) used in the preceding verse.

The verdict of the Lord contained in the foregoing verse in favour of the worshippers of God with form and attributes raises the question whether the worshippers of the formless and attributeless Brahma are not the best knowers of Yoga. The question is answered in the next two verses.

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते।
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम्॥ ३॥
सन्नियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः॥ ४॥

तु however; ये who; इन्द्रियग्रामम् the aggregate of their senses; सन्नियम्य fully controlling; अचिन्त्यम् beyond the grasp of mind and intellect; सर्वत्रगम् Omnipresent; अनिर्देश्यम् indefinable; कूटस्थम् changeless; ध्रुवम् constant; अचलम् immovable; च and; अव्यक्तम् unmanifest; अक्षरम् the

---

* या दोहनेऽवहनने मथनोपलेपप्रेङ्खेङ्खनार्भरुदितोक्षणमार्जनादौ।
गायन्ति चैनमनुरक्तधियोऽश्रुकण्ठ्यो धन्या व्रजस्त्रिय उरुक्रमचित्तयानाः॥

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* X.44.15)

"Blessed are the Gopīs of Vraja, who have their mind absorbed in the thought of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and sing His glories with a heart full of love, eyes bedewed with tears and a voice choked with emotion even while milking their cows, pounding the corn for removing the husk, churning the curds, plastering the courtyard with cow-dung, swinging infants in the cradle, lulling their crying children to sleep, sprinkling water on the floors and sweeping them, and doing everything else."

indestructible (Brahma); पर्युपासते constantly adore (as their very self); ते they; सर्वभूतहिते to the welfare of all beings; रता: devoted; सर्वत्र towards all; समबुद्धय: even-minded; माम् Me; एव alone; प्राप्नुवन्ति attain.

Those, however, who fully controlling all their senses and even-minded towards all, and devoted to the welfare of all beings, constantly adore as their very self the unthinkable; omnipresent, indestructible indefinable, eternal, immovable, unmanifest and changeless Brahma, they too come to Me. (3, 4)

That which is all-pervading like ether-fills every atom of space—is called 'Sarvatraga'.

'Anirdeśya' is that which cannot be defined, which cannot be represented or indicated by any device or illustration.

That which never undergoes change under any circumstance whatsoever, and ever remains in the same state of existence, is called 'Kūṭastha'.

That which is eternal and certain, whose existence is free from doubt and which never ceases to be, is called 'Dhruva'.

'Acala' signifies that which is incapable of motion and vibration both.

'Avyakta' means that which is beyond the grasp of, or imperceptible by, the senses, and which is devoid of any shape or form.

'Akṣara' is that which can never and on no account be destroyed.

All these attributes are characteristics of the absolute, formless Brahma. And the best way to worship Brahma is to realize Its true character as pointed out above and constantly meditate on it as one's own self.

Even as a man lacking true wisdom is devoted to his own welfare, worshippers of the Absolute, identified as they are with all beings, are equally devoted to the good of all creatures. This is what is meant by the adjectival phrase 'Sarvabhūtahite Ratāḥ'.

Similarly, the phrase 'Sarvatra Samabuddhayaḥ' indicates that those who worship the absolute, formless Brahma in the aforesaid manner lose all sense of distinction between one self and another. Seeing no reality apart from Brahma in the whole universe, they naturally become even-minded towards all.

The assurance contained in the present verse, viz., that the worshippers of the absolute also come to the Lord, proclaims His identity with the absolute. The intention is to show that in reality the one supreme Brahma or God alone has been represented in different forms for being worshipped by different individuals according to their respective qualifications. Of these, the transcendent and inconceivable absolute aspect of God, which is beyond the reach of mind and speech, is in fact one whereas the Saguṇa or relative aspect of God is twofold in character viz., (i) possessed of form and (ii) devoid of form. That which pervades the whole universe and is the support of all, and which by its inconceivable power sustains and nourishes all, is the unmanifest or formless qualified aspect of God, Śrī Śiva; Śrī Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and so on are the embodied forms of God; whereas this universe represents the Cosmic Forms of God. Therefore, realization of the absolute resulting from the type of adoration mentioned above means the attainment of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; for the absolute is the same as God and God is the same as the absolute. The two are identical. The same idea is echoed in XIV.27, where the Lord declares Himself as the support of Brahma (ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहम्).

In Chapter XI the Lord says that through single-minded devotion one can see

Him, know Him in essence, and even enter into Him (XI.54). This shows that while true knowledge and realization of God are shared with the devotee even by the worshipper of the Absolute; God is not bound to grant the vision of His embodied form to the latter. The worshipper of the Saguṇa aspect of God, however, obtains this vision as well. Herein lies the superiority of the devotee.

Thus discussing the worship of the Absolute and its reward, the Lord now declares that atonement with the Unmanifest is difficult to attain for those who are centred in the body, and that the path leading to such atonement is also rugged.

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ ५ ॥

तेषाम् अव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् for those aforesaid persons who have their mind attached to the Unmanifest; क्लेशः the strain; अधिकतरः (is) greater; हि because; देहवद्भिः by those centred in the body; अव्यक्ता गतिः oneness with the Unmanifest (Absolute); दुःखम् with difficulty; अवाप्यते is attained.

Of course, the strain is greater for those who have their mind attached to the Unmanifest; for oneness with the Unmanifest (Absolute) is attained with difficulty by those who are centred in the body. (5)

The pronoun 'Teṣām', qualified by the adjective 'Avyaktāsaktacetasām', refers to the worshippers of the absolute (who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified) mentioned in the preceding verse. By calling their path as more rugged the Lord shows that the truth relating to the Absolute is extremely difficult to grasp. It can be understood only by those whose intellect is unsullied, steady and penetrating and who have no identification with the body. It beats the comprehension of the common man. Hence the worship of the Absolute involves considerable strain in its initial stages.

The latter half of the verse explains how the worship of the Absolute involves greater strain. The intention is to show that so long as there is identification with the body, the truth relating to the Absolute is most difficult to grasp.

Here it may be contended that whereas the present verse declares the worship of the Unmanifest as involving greater strain, verse 2 of Chapter IX shows Jñāna and Vijñāna, *i.e.* knowledge of the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God as easy to attain (कर्तुम् सुसुखम्), and is followed by a description of the Unmanifest in verses 4, 5 and 6. Though these two statements appear as mutually contradictory, there is, as a matter of fact, no contradiction between them. For the words 'Jñāna' and Vijñāna' in Chapter IX have a special reference to the virtues, glory and reality of the qualified aspect of God; hence it is the practice of surrender to God with attributes that has been declared as 'easy to practise' in that context. Again, the word 'Avyakta' occurring in verse 4 of that Chapter stands for the formless God with attributes. That is why He has been spoken of as the sustainer and nourisher of beings, all pervading and as responsible for the creation etc., of all beings, even though standing aloof from all.

Again, it may be argued that after delineating the process of worship of the Absolute in verses 24 to 27 of Chapter VI the Lord declares in verse 28 that the

Sādhaka who sedulously follows this practice easily attains supreme bliss in the shape of God-realization. That too should not be taken as conflicting in any way with the statement contained in the present verse. For the verses mentioned above refer to the Yogī who has been rid of all sins, in whom the impulses of Rajas (activity) and Tamas (inertia) have been stilled, and who stands identified with Brahma, and not to those who are centred in the body. Hence it is but reasonable to say that realization of Brahma comes to them easily and as a matter of course.

Here it may be asked: Do the worshippers of the Absolute alone have to undergo considerable strain in course of their practice, and not the worshippers of God with attributes ? Our reply is: No, the worshippers of God with attributes have not to undergo much strain. For, in the first place, the worship of God with attributes is easy to practise. Secondly, the worshipper of God with attributes depends exclusively on God and is constantly engaged in His thought; hence God Himself helps him in every way. Why, then, should he undergo any strain in course of his practice ?

Thus declaring God-realization through the worship of the attributeless and formless Brahma as difficult to attain for those centred in the body, the Lord now shows in the following two verses that He is speedily and easily attained through worship of His qualified aspect.

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मत्पराः ।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥ ६ ॥

तु on the other hand; ये who; मत्पराः depending on Me; सर्वाणि कर्माणि all actions; मयि to Me; सन्न्यस्य surrendering; माम् Me (God with attributes); एव alone; अनन्येन योगेन with single-minded devotion; ध्यायन्तः (constantly) meditating on Me; उपासते worship.

On the other hand, those who depending exclusively on Me, and surrendering all actions to Me, worship Me (God with attributes), constantly meditating on Me with single-minded devotion. (6)

The indeclinable 'Tu' is intended to distinguish the worshippers of God with attributes from the worshippers of the Absolute.

Those who depend on God remain undaunted and unperturbed like the great devotee Prahlāda even when faced with trials and tribulations of various kinds. Nay, they take those sorrows and sufferings not only as a boon from God but as something agreeable, and surrender themselves to God, knowing Him to be the supreme lover, the highest goal, the greatest friend and worth resorting to in every way. All this is conveyed by the adjectival compound 'Matparāḥ'.

Again, he who surrenders all actions to God performs all his duties according to His directions and hints as a mere puppet, denying himself freedom of action. He neither acknowledges those actions as his own nor does he conceive any attachment for them and is altogether unconcerned about their fruit. All his activities conform to the canons of the scriptures and are governed by the idea that he is a mere instrument, utterly incapable of doing anything, and that it is God who is getting everything done by him according to His own will.

'Single-minded devotion' means

exclusive and disinterested love, combined with utmost reverence, for God He who cultivates this love recognizes no one else than God as his own and feels that He is everything to him. Again, such a love is wholly untainted by selfishness, egoism and inconstancy; it is consummate in every respect and unshakable. It is wholly undivided and is so intense that it makes it impossible for the lover to forget the Beloved even for a moment. And worshipping God through such devotion is to listen to and sing His virtues, glory and stories, and loudly chant or mutter His names.

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात्।
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम्॥ ७॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; मयि on Me; आवेशितचेतसाम् तेषाम् of those persons having their mind fixed; अहम् I; नचिरात् without delay, speedily; मृत्युसंसारसागरात् from the ocean of worldly existence, which is synonymous with mortality; समुद्धर्ता deliverer; भवामि I become.

These, Arjuna, I speedily deliver from the ocean of birth and death, their mind being fixed on Me. (7)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Teṣām', qualified by the adjectival phrase 'Mayi Āveśitacetasām' refers to the loving devotees worshipping God with attributes and spoken of in the preceding verse as having their mind and intellect merged once for all in God.

Everything in this world is embraced by death. With the exception of God nothing which makes its appearance in the universe is ever immune, even for a moment, from the buffets of death. And even as countless waves continue to rise and fall on the surface of the ocean, so do births and deaths constantly take place in this world. It may be possible to count the waves of the ocean; but there is no knowing how many times a soul will have to undergo birth and death so long as he does not realize God. That is why this world has been compared to an ocean.

God speedily exempts from birth and death once for all, and brings face to face with Himself in this very life, those devotees who constantly worship Him with their mind and intellect fixed on Him, as stated above; or He takes them after death to His supreme abode. Nay, even as a boatman takes one in his boat across a river, so does God warding off all difficulties and dangers confronting the devotee, takes him across the terrible ocean of worldly existence to His own supreme abode. This is what is meant by his delivering the devotee from the ocean of birth and death.

Thus showing in the above verses that worship of God with attributes is easier to practise than that of the Absolute, the Lord now commands Arjuna to take to the former, fixing his mind and intellect on God as indicated above.

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः॥ ८॥

मयि on Me; मनः the mind; आधत्स्व fix; मयि (and) in Me; एव only; बुद्धिम् (your) intellect; निवेशय establish; अतः ऊर्ध्वम् thereafter; मयि in Me; एव only; निवसिष्यसि you

shall abide; संशयः doubt; न (there is) not.

Therefore, fix your mind on Me, and establish your intellect in Me alone; thereafter you will abide solely in Me. There is no doubt about it. (8)

Pervading the whole universe consisting of animate and inanimate beings, God is enshrined in the heart of all. He is an ocean of countless virtues like compassion omniscience, amiability and cordiality etc. Nay, He is supreme, transcendent and omnipotent, all love and joy, the best of all beings and worth resorting to He who, having thoroughly grasped the truth and mystery of His virtues, glory and sports, is ever unshaken in his conclusions is said to have established his intellect in God. And he who, having wholly withdrawn his attachment from everything else than his most beloved Puruṣottama or God, merges his mind in Him alone and remains constantly engaged in His thought in the aforesaid manner is said to have fixed his mind on God.

He who is thus able to fix his mind and intellect on God speedily attains Him.

Although this is a fact, very few people actually fix their mind and intellect on God. The reason is not far to seek. Being ignorant of the truth and mystery of God's virtues etc., people have no love and reverence for Him; and since their attachment, which is rooted in ignorance, is still there, worldly enjoyments continue to absorb their thought. Such is the condition of most of the people in this world. That is why the generality of men do not as a rule fix their mind and intellect on God.

This attachment, which has its root in ignorance and is responsible for our evil habit of dwelling on worldy enjoyments, can, however, be got rid of through knowledge of the truth and mystery of the divine virtues, glory and sports. And this knowledge may be gained through the association of exalted souls who are aware of the truth and secret of God's virtues etc., by emulating their virtues and example, and by diligently following the path chalked out by them, giving up enjoyments, lethargy and error.

At this point it may be asked: If a man fails to fix his mind and intellect on God as suggested above, what should he do? Anticipating this question, the Lord says:—

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम्।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय॥ ९॥

अथ in case; चित्तम् the mind; मयि on Me; स्थिरम् steadily; समाधातुम् to fix; न शक्नोषि you cannot; ततः then; धनञ्जय O Arjuna (*lit.*, conqueror of riches); अभ्यासयोगेन through the Yoga of repeated practice; माम् Me; आप्तुम् to attain; इच्छ seek.

If you cannot steadily fix the mind on Me, Arjuna, then seek to attain Me through the Yoga of repeated practice. (9)

The teaching of the Gītā, though immediately directed towards Arjuna, is intended for the benefit of the whole world. The temperament of all Sādhakas in the world is not uniform; that is why the same mode of spiritual practice cannot suit all. Only different types of spiritual discipline suit different temperaments. Hence the Lord suggests a different course of discipline for those who find themselves unable to fix their mind and intellect on God.

'Abhyāsayoga' means repeatedly striving

through various devices, to fix the mind on God with a view to His realization. Thus endeavouring again and again, for the sake of God-realization, to fix the mind on any name, form, virtue and sport, etc. of God which attracts him, and for which he has got some reverence; is what is meant by seeking to attain God through the Yoga of repeated practice.

Practices of various kinds have been recommended in the Sāstras for focussing the mind on God. Of them the following few devices appear particularly suited to the bulk of the Sādhakas:—

(1) It is a matter of common experience that, when we close our eyes in front of the sun, we see through our mental eye a mass of splendour uniformly extending all around us. Concluding with the mind that the mass of effulgence constituting the Godhead is thousands of times brighter than the above light, attempt should be made again and again to fix one's mind on that shining, all-effulgent form of God.

(2) Knowing God Almighty to be present everywhere, even as fire is ever present in a match, and the sole object of love, He should be lovingly conceived with all His virtues and glory wherever the mind goes. Such a practice brings the devotee face to face with the all-pervasive God even as friction reveals the fire hidden in a match.

(3) Withdrawing the mind from the object it runs after, try to fix it again and again with reverence and love on a mental or material image (made of clay, stone or wood), or a picture of your chosen Deity, be it Bhagavān Viṣṇu, Śiva, Rāma or Kṛṣṇa, or on the Japa of His sacred names.

(4) Repeating the sacred syllable OM without pause in imitation of the humming of the bee, contemplate on God, again and again, in that sound.

(5) Practise constant Japa of the Divine Name in rhythm with every natural flow of the ingoing and outgoing breath.

(6) Diligently pursue the study of sacred books with a view to grasping the secret of God's name, form, virtue, sports and glory.

(7) Practise Prāṇāyāma or control of breath as described in IV.29.

If any of these practices is pursued with reverence, faith and devotion, it will gradually eradicate all sins, remove all obstacles and finally brings the Sādhaka face to face with God. Therefore, the practice should be continued with exemplary zeal and diligence. Of course, the fruition of his efforts may be speeded up or delayed according to the spiritual level and qualification of the Sādhaka and the progress made by him on the path of Sādhana. Therefore, if the realization of the fruit is delayed, the Sādhaka should neither give up nor slacken the practice, regarding it as difficult, or due to ennui or sloth.

It may be asked here : If a Sādhaka is unable to follow the Yoga of repeated practice, what should he do ? Anticipating this question, the Lord says:—

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि॥ १०॥

अभ्यासे to (the pursuit of) such practice; **अपि** even; **असमर्थः** unequal; **असि** (if) you are; **मत्कर्मपरमः** intent on performing actions for Me; **भव** be; **मदर्थम्** for My sake; **कर्माणि** actions; **कुर्वन्** performing; **अपि** even; **सिद्धिम्** perfection (in the shape of My Realization); **अवाप्स्यसि** you shall attain.

If You are unequal even to the pursuit of such practice, be intent to work

for Me; you shall attain perfection (in the shape of My realization) even by performing actions for My sake. (10)

Although, as a matter of fact, it was in no way difficult for Arjuna to fix his mind on God, or realize Him through the Yoga of repeated practice as stated above, the Lord asks him not to despair even if he found himself unequal to the task, and suggests a third alternative. For, as already pointed out above, different types of practices are suited to different individuals due to difference in temperament. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

The compound word 'Matkarma' denotes those actions which are performed only for the sake of God or are connected with His service or adoration, nay, in which the Sādhaka has no trace of self-interest and for which he appropriates no credit to himself nor conceives any attachment whatsoever. The word has already appeared in the concluding verse of Chapter XI, and has been duly explained.

He who recognizes God and God alone as his supreme refuge and highest goal and goes on constantly performing through mind, speech and body actions enjoined by the scriptures, such as sacrifices, charity and penance, with utmost reverence and love only for the pleasure of God and as a matter of duty is said to be 'intent on work for God.'

By the second half of this verse the Lord indicates that even actions performed for His sake constitute an independent and easy means to His Realization. God can be attained even by those who work for Him, in the same way as by those who adore and meditate on Him. Therefore, performing actions for His sake is in no way inferior to the other practices mentioned above.

Here one may ask: If the Sādhaka finds himself unable even to perform action for God's sake as stated above, what should he do ? Anticipating this question, the Lord says:—

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान्॥ ११॥

अथ if; मद्योगम् the Yoga of My realization; आश्रितः devoted to; एतत् this; कर्तुम् to do; अपि even; अशक्तः unable; असि you are; ततः then; यतात्मवान् having subdued (your) mind and intellect etc.; सर्वकर्मफलत्यागम् renunciation of the fruit of all actions; कुरु take recourse to.

If, taking recourse to the Yoga of My realization, you are unable even to do this, then, subduing your mind and intellect etc., relinquish the fruit of all actions. (11)

In reality, it was not at all difficult for Arjuna to tread the path of Action coupled with Devotion; nay, it was rather easy for him. Nevertheless, if he regarded it as actually difficult, the Lord now suggests a fourth type of discipline for him. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the first half of this verse.

The world 'Ātman', forming part of the compound 'Yatātmavān' stands for the body including the mind, intellect and senses. Therefore, 'Yatātmavān' is he who has acquired control over his mind, intellect, senses and body. The mind and senses etc., unless they are brought under control, forcibly drag one into the mire of enjoyments; and

caught in the mire of enjoyments one cannot give up attachment to or yearning for the fruit of all actions in the shape of enjoyments. Therefore, recognizing the supreme need of self-control in renouncing the fruit of all actions the Lord advises Arjuna to subdue his mind and senses.

One may ask here: How is it that the Lord does not insist on self-control as a part of the spiritual practices enjoined in verses 6 to 10 above ? The reason is not far to seek. It will be seen that verses 6, 7 and 8 of this chapter deal with those who practise single-minded devotion to God. Since such loving devotees of God have no attraction for the enjoyments of the world, their mind and intellect remain naturally indifferent towards the world and centred on God. Hence there was no occasion for insisting on their subjugation in those verses.

Verse 9 speaks of the Yoga of repeated practice or Abhyāsayoga; and since 'Abhyāsayoga' covers all practices for fixing the mind and intellect on God there was no necessity of insisting on self-control separately in that verse. And verse 10 speaks of the path of Action coupled with Devotion, which presupposes dependence on God; and all actions of the Sādhaka following this path are aslo performed only for the sake of God. Hence it was unnecessary to ask Arjuna to control his mind and senses etc., as a separate discipline. The present verse, however, enjoins the practice of Karmayoga in the shape of renunciation of the fruit of all actions, in which control of the mind and intellect is indispensable. For if the mind, intellect and senses are not kept under control while performing all the duties of the world appropriate to one's grade in society and stage in life, it is very easy for the mind, intellect and the senses to develop attachment and craving for, and the sense of possession in respect of, sense-enjoyments; and so long as they are present total renunciation of the fruit of actions cannot be accomplished. That is why Arjuna has been specially warned in this verse to subdue his mind and intellect etc.

"All actions" in this verse include the performance of sacrifices, charity, austerity, social service and all other activities approved of by the Sāstras and carried on for the sake of one's livelihood or for bare maintenance in conformity with one's grade in society and stage in life. While duly performing these actions, he who renounces all connection with, attachment to, and the craving for, their fruit in the form of enjoyments of this world and the next is said to renounce the fruit of all actions.

Here it should be noted that prohibited actions, such as telling lies, practising duplicity and committing adultery, violence and theft etc., are not included in the 'Sarvakarma' referred to in this verse. Attachment to, and the craving for, enjoyments alone is responsible for sinful acts of this kind, which bring about man's degradation from every point of view. That is why the scriptures advise actual and total renunciation of such acts; when such actions themselves stand prohibited, renunciation of their fruit is altogether out of question.

It will be recalled here that the Lord, in the first instance, called upon Arjuna to fix his mind and intellect on Him; He next recommended the Yoga of repeated practice; thereafter He asked Arjuna to work for His sake; and, finally, He exhorted him to renounce the fruit of all actions. It will be further seen that the Lord advises an alternative course only in the event of Arjuna's inability to follow the one previously suggested. The method adopted by the Lord, however, does not imply any disparity in the fruit of the various practices recommended by Him; for they all bear the same fruit,

viz., God-realization. Nor is it intended to convey that the practice suggested as an alternative is easier than the one recommended before; for such is not actually the case. A practice which is easy for one may be difficult for another. On this ground it is reasonable to suppose that the four practices have been recommended only to suit the varying qualifications of different types of Sādhakas.

Careful analysis will reveal that the practice enjoined in verse 8 is easy and suitable for the Sādhaka in whose mental constitution there is predominance of love for God with attributes, and who has a natural reverence for God, and an inborn attraction for His virtues, glory and mysteries and the stories of His sports.

The practice recommended in verse 9 is easy and useful for the Sādhaka who has no natural love for God but who, being endowed with faith, seeks to concentrate his mind on God through resolute practice.

Again, the Sādhaka who has reverence for God with attributes, and a natural attraction for pursuits such as the performance of sacrifices, charity and penance, and has got faith in the worship and adoration of images etc., of God, will find the practice suggested in verse 10 easy and suited to his temperament.

And the Sādhaka who has no natural love and reverence for God with attributes and form, who recognizes God as only all-pervading and formless, who has a natural bias for worldly pursuits and works of public good, and who because of his greater faith in and attraction for external activities cannot attune his mind even to the Yoga of repeated practice recommended in verse 9, will find the practice enjoined in the present verse easy and suited to his nature.

Now offering all actions to God, as mentioned in verse 6 above, performing all actions for His sake, and renouncing the fruit of all actions—all these three are different forms of Karmayoga; and as pointed out above, they all lead to God-realization. Hence there is no disparity whatsoever in their fruit. They have been differentiated only because of the difference in the mental attitude of the Sādhakas as well as in the process of their practice. In the first two processes the sentiment of devotion is predominant, whereas in the third the emphasis lies on the renunciation of the fruit of actions. Herein lies the main difference among them. Besides this, the Sādhaka who has offered all his actions to God considers himself as a mere puppet in His hands; he feels that he is capable of doing nothing, that his mind, intellect, senses and all other organs belong to God, who gets everything done by them according to His own will, the Sādhaka himself having nothing to do with those acts or their fruit. Inspired by such feelings, the Sādhaka entertains not the least attraction or aversion for his actions or their fruit; taking all pleasurable or painful experiences that fall to his lot in consequence of his Prārabdha (good or evil destiny) as a boon from God, he remains ever cheerful. That is why, developing the feeling of oneness towards all, he speedily succeeds in realizing God.

He who works for God's sake does not, like the above-mentioned Sādhaka, feel that he does nothing and that it is God who gets everything done by him. He looks upon God as the object of highest worship, supremely loving and the greatest friend and well-wisher, and considers it his supreme duty to serve Him and carry out his behests. That is why, realizing His presence throughout the universe, he remains engaged in performance of sacrifices, charity and penance; earning his livelihood and

performing other duties for the maintenance of his body in conformity with his grade in society and stage in life, as well as in pursuits connected with the worship and adoration etc., of God with a view to His service and according to His behests as conveyed through the scriptures. And since all his activities are carrried on according to His behests and for the sake of His service (XI.55), he is freed from attachment and desire for all such activities and their fruit, and speedily attains God.

The Sādhaka who relinquishes the fruit of all actions, however, neither considers himself to be a tool in the hands of God nor does he feel that he does everything for His sake. He holds that man's right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof (II.47-51), so that his duty lies only in performing sacrifices, charity, austerity, social service and all other activities enjoined by the Śāstras, such as earning one's livelihood and attending to one's bodily needs etc., according to one's grade in society and stage in life. That is why he totally renounces all connection with, attachment to and desire for the fruit of such actions in the shape of the enjoyments of this world and the next (XVIII.9); and being completely rid of attraction and aversion thereby, he quickly realizes God.

Thus, through the fruit of all the three practices is one and the same, viz., God-realization, the difference in the mental outlook of the Sādhakas as well as in the process of their practice accounts for three different practices having been enunciated by the Lord.

Recommending alternative practices one after another in verses 8 to 11 in the event of Arjuna's failure to adopt the one already suggested, the Lord finally insisted on his 'relinquishing the fruit of all actions'. This may naturally lead one to imagine that 'renunciation of the fruit of actions' must be an inferior type of Sādhana as compared to the other forms of spiritual discipline previously recommended. In order to remove such a doubt from Arjuna's mind, the Lord glorifies such renunciation in the next verse.

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२ ॥

अभ्यासात् than practice (without discernment); ज्ञानम् knowledge; श्रेयः (is) better; ज्ञानात् to knowledge; ध्यानम् meditation (on God); विशिष्यते is superior; ध्यानात् (even) than meditation; कर्मफलत्यागः renunciation of the fruit of actions (is better); हि because; त्यागात् from renunciation; अनन्तरम् immediately; शान्तिः (follows) peace.

Knowledge is better than practice (without discernment), meditation on God is superior to knowledge, and renunciation of the fruit of actions is even superior to meditation; for peace immediately follows from renunciation. (12)

The word 'Abhyāsa' in this verse does not stand for 'Abhyāsayoga' or the Yoga of repeated practice. For, it is taken to mean the 'Yoga of repeated practice' undertaken with discernment for the realization of the Absolute, it would be meaningless to compare it with 'Knowledge' inasmuch as such a practice is accompanied with knowledge. Even so, if the word is interpreted to mean practices undertaken for Karmayoga, or the practices of meditation, such practices form part of Karmayoga and meditation respectively; hence there would be no sense in comparing them with meditation, or with

the renunciation of the fruit of actions. Therefore, the word 'Abhyāsa' here denotes effort involving cessation of worldly activities, or in other words, practices such as the practice of Prāṇāyāma or breath-control, the attempt to achieve a particular Āsana or Yogic posture, the practice of mind-control, the muttering of a sacred formula, recitation of hymns in praise of a deity, study of the Vedas etc., habitually carried on without discernment and involving no renunciation of desires or attachment, and to which one naturally feels inclined under the influence of faith, environment and inborn disposition. Even so, the word 'Jñāna' here does not mean the Path of Knowledge, or Knowledge itself in the form of true realization. For, if it is taken to mean Jñānayoga, it cannot be divorced from meditation which is part and parcel of that discipline; and if it is held to be an equivalent of true Knowledge, it is the fruit of all forms of discipline. In that case there would be no meaning in comparing it with mechanical practice, meditation or renunciation of the fruit of actions, much less in declaring meditation or even renunciation of the fruit of actions as superior to it. The word 'Jñāna' in the present context should, therefore, be construed to mean discriminative knowledge or intellectual perception of a high order, gained either through a study of the scriptures or through association with saints, with the help of which man is no doubt able to distinguish the eternal from the ephemeral, matter from the spirit, good from evil, sin from virtue, and so on. But since his mind is yet impure and distracted, a man possessing such knowledge neither feels inclined to take to any practice or discipline nor is he able to renounce the fruit of actions and attachment, nor being freed from all relationship with the world he gets firmly and unshakably established in God.

Both 'Abhyāsa' and 'Jñāna' as interpreted above are in their own way helpful in God-realization. Both can lead to this consummation if they are accompanied with faith, devotion and the disinterested spirit. Nevertheless, when a comparison is made between them, knowledge proves superior to practice; for practice without discernment cannot be so helpful in God-realization as knowledge devoid of practice can. In order to show this very fact, the verse speaks of knowledge as better than practice.

The word 'Dhyāna' too in this verse does not refer to Dhyānayoga or the path of Meditation. That is to say, it neither stands for meditation on the attributeless Brahma, practised for the sake of God-realization according to the procedure of Sāṅkhyayoga nor for meditation on God, the repository of all virtues, practised with faith and devotion only for the sake of His Realization, wholly renouncing the fruit of actions and attachment. For both these forms of meditation involve knowledge and renunciation of the fruit of actions; hence comparison between either of these two forms of meditation, on the one hand, and knowledge or relinquishment of the fruit of actions, on the other, is out of question. Hence the word 'Dhyāna', in the present context, should be interpreted to mean meditation on any of the various forms of God, practised without discernment and with some interested motive.

Both 'Jñāna' and 'Dhyāna', as interpreted above, are in their own way helpful in God-realization. They both lead to such consummation when accompanied with faith, devotion and the disinterested spirit. Nevertheless, when a comparison is made between them, meditation will prove superior to knowledge; for knowledge by itself, without meditation, cannot be so useful as

performing other duties for the maintenance of his body in conformity with his grade in society and stage in life, as well as in pursuits connected with the worship and adoration etc., of God with a view to His service and according to His behests as conveyed through the scriptures. And since all his activities are carrried on according to His behests and for the sake of His service (XI.55), he is freed from attachment and desire for all such activities and their fruit, and speedily attains God.

The Sādhaka who relinquishes the fruit of all actions, however, neither considers himself to be a tool in the hands of God nor does he feel that he does everything for His sake. He holds that man's right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof (II.47-51), so that his duty lies only in performing sacrifices, charity, austerity, social service and all other activities enjoined by the Śāstras, such as earning one's livelihood and attending to one's bodily needs etc., according to one's grade in society and stage in life. That is why he totally renounces all connection with, attachment to and desire for the fruit of such actions in the shape of the enjoyments of this world and the next (XVIII.9); and being completely rid of attraction and aversion thereby, he quickly realizes God.

Thus, through the fruit of all the three practices is one and the same, viz., God-realization, the difference in the mental outlook of the Sādhakas as well as in the process of their practice accounts for three different practices having been enunciated by the Lord.

Recommending alternative practices one after another in verses 8 to 11 in the event of Arjuna's failure to adopt the one already suggested, the Lord finally insisted on his 'relinquishing the fruit of all actions'. This may naturally lead one to imagine that 'renunciation of the fruit of actions' must be an inferior type of Sādhana as compared to the other forms of spiritual discipline previously recommended. In order to remove such a doubt from Arjuna's mind, the Lord glorifies such renunciation in the next verse.

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२॥

अभ्यासात् than practice (without discernment); ज्ञानम् knowledge; श्रेयः (is) better; ज्ञानात् to knowledge; ध्यानम् meditation (on God); विशिष्यते is superior; ध्यानात् (even) than meditation; कर्मफलत्यागः renunciation of the fruit of actions (is better); हि because; त्यागात् from renunciation; अनन्तरम् immediately; शान्तिः (follows) peace.

Knowledge is better than practice (without discernment), meditation on God is superior to knowledge, and renunciation of the fruit of actions is even superior to meditation; for peace immediately follows from renunciation. (12)

The word 'Abhyāsa' in this verse does not stand for 'Abhyāsayoga' or the Yoga of repeated practice. For, it is taken to mean the 'Yoga of repeated practice' undertaken with discernment for the realization of the Absolute, it would be meaningless to compare it with 'Knowledge' inasmuch as such a practice is accompanied with knowledge. Even so, if the word is interpreted to mean practices undertaken for Karmayoga, or the practices of meditation, such practices form part of Karmayoga and meditation respectively; hence there would be no sense in comparing them with meditation, or with

the renunciation of the fruit of actions. Therefore, the word 'Abhyāsa' here denotes effort involving cessation of worldly activities, or in other words, practices such as the practice of Prāṇāyāma or breath-control, the attempt to achieve a particular Āsana or Yogic posture, the practice of mind-control, the muttering of a sacred formula, recitation of hymns in praise of a deity, study of the Vedas etc., habitually carried on without discernment and involving no renunciation of desires or attachment, and to which one naturally feels inclined under the influence of faith, environment and inborn disposition. Even so, the word 'Jñāna' here does not mean the Path of Knowledge, or Knowledge itself in the form of true realization. For, if it is taken to mean Jñānayoga, it cannot be divorced from meditation which is part and parcel of that discipline; and if it is held to be an equivalent of true Knowledge, it is the fruit of all forms of discipline. In that case there would be no meaning in comparing it with mechanical practice, meditation or renunciation of the fruit of actions, much less in declaring meditation or even renunciation of the fruit of actions as superior to it. The word 'Jñāna' in the present context should, therefore, be construed to mean discriminative knowledge or intellectual perception of a high order, gained either through a study of the scriptures or through association with saints, with the help of which man is no doubt able to distinguish the eternal from the ephemeral, matter from the spirit, good from evil, sin from virtue, and so on. But since his mind is yet impure and distracted, a man possessing such knowledge neither feels inclined to take to any practice or discipline nor is he able to renounce the fruit of actions and attachment, nor being freed from all relationship with the world he gets firmly and unshakably established in God.

Both 'Abhyāsa' and 'Jñāna' as interpreted above are in their own way helpful in God-realization. Both can lead to this consummation if they are accompanied with faith, devotion and the disinterested spirit. Nevertheless, when a comparison is made between them, knowledge proves superior to practice; for practice without discernment cannot be so helpful in God-realization as knowledge devoid of practice can. In order to show this very fact, the verse speaks of knowledge as better than practice.

The word 'Dhyāna' too in this verse does not refer to Dhyānayoga or the path of Meditation. That is to say, it neither stands for meditation on the attributeless Brahma, practised for the sake of God-realization according to the procedure of Sāṅkhyayoga nor for meditation on God, the repository of all virtues, practised with faith and devotion only for the sake of His Realization, wholly renouncing the fruit of actions and attachment. For both these forms of meditation involve knowledge and renunciation of the fruit of actions; hence comparison between either of these two forms of meditation, on the one hand, and knowledge or relinquishment of the fruit of actions, on the other, is out of question. Hence the word 'Dhyāna', in the present context, should be interpreted to mean meditation on any of the various forms of God, practised without discernment and with some interested motive.

Both 'Jñāna' and 'Dhyāna', as interpreted above, are in their own way helpful in God-realization. They both lead to such consummation when accompanied with faith, devotion and the disinterested spirit. Nevertheless, when a comparison is made between them, meditation will prove superior to knowledge; for knowledge by itself, without meditation, cannot be so useful as

meditation practised without knowledge. When one attains success in meditation, the impurity and distraction of the mind gradually disappear; but they cannot be eradicated through mere knowledge. It is with this idea that meditation has been declared as superior to knowledge.

'Karmaphalatyāga' is the same as 'Sarvakarmaphalatyāga' referred to in verse 11 above. The type of meditation referred to above is also helpful in God-realization; but such realization cannot be easily attained so long as man's desire and attachment are not eradicated. Therefore, meditation not accompanied with renunciation of the fruit of actions cannot be so useful as renunciation of the fruit of, and attachment to, all actions can even without meditation. It should be particularly noted in this connection that the present verse is not intended to assess the relative value of Abhyāsayoga. Jñānayoga, Dhyānayoga and Karmayoga. On the other hand, it discusses the comparative merits of mechanical practice, knowledge and meditation as defined above; and while pointing out the superiority of the second to the first and of the third to the second, it declares renunciation of the fruit of all actions as superior to all. That is to say, even though the practices of Abhyāsa, Jñāna and Dhyāna, which involve the cessation of worldly activities, are successively higher, and more Sāttvika in character, than pursuits involving worldly activity such as the performance of sacrifices, charity, warfare, trade and social service etc., nevertheless one's own duty, through humblest in character, acquires the capacity to yield the highest result, viz., God-realization, when performed with complete renunciation of its fruit and attachment. What wonder, then, that other-wordly pursuits like Abhyāsa, Jñāna and Dhyāna should lead to God-realization when carried on with that object. Therefore, instead of drawing comparison between the various disciplines for God-realization, man should choose for himself one which is suited to his temperament, and which he may be able to adopt easily and speedily, and devote himself to its practice with faith and reverence.

Recommending in the above verses several practices for God-realization as so many limbs of devotion, the Lord declared that they all lead to God-realization. This naturally arouses in one's mind the desire to know the marks of a God-realized devotee absorbed in divine love, and in order to satisfy such curiosity the Lord now describes in the next seven verses the marks of enlightened devotees who have realized God.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी॥ १३॥
सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः॥ १४॥

यः who; **सर्वभूतानाम्** towards all creatures; **अद्वेष्टा** (is) free from malice; **मैत्रः** friendly; **च** and; **करुणः** compassionate; **एव** indeed; **निर्ममः** devoid of the feeling of meum; **निरहङ्कारः** free from egoism; **समदुःखसुखः** treating pleasure and pain alike; **क्षमी** forgiving by nature; **योगी** mentally united with Me; **सततम्** ever; **सन्तुष्टः** contented; **यतात्मा** having subdued his mind, senses and body; **दृढनिश्चयः** firm of resolve; **सः** that; **मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिः** who has surrendered his mind and reason to Me; **मद्भक्तः** My own devotee; **मे** to Me; **प्रियः** (is) dear.

He who is free from malice towards all beings, friendly and compassionate, rid of 'I' and 'mine', balanced in joy and sorrow, forgiving by nature, ever-contented and mentally united with Me, nay, who has subdued his mind, senses and body, has a firm resolve, and has surrendered his mind and reason to Me,—that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. (13,14)

Though directly connected with the adjective 'Adveṣṭā' only, the compound word 'Sarvabhūtānām' in the first of the above two verses has indirect reference to 'Maitraḥ' and 'Karuṇaḥ' as well. The intention is to show that the devotee who has realized God is not only free from malice towards all beings, but he is also their disinterested friend and naturally compassionate to them all.

It may be contended here that a God-realized soul sees unity everywhere; how, then, can he cherish distinctive emotions like friendliness and compassion ? Our answer to this question is that the Sādhaka treading the path of devotion cultivates from the very beginning the virtues of 'friendliness' and 'compassion' in a special degree; hence they become a part of his nature and are therefore easily discernible in his dealings even on his attaining perfection. Besides this, even as God is naturally full of boundless compassion and love etc., it is but meet and proper that His devotee too who has attained perfection, should possess these virtues.

The adjectives 'Nirmamaḥ' and Nirahankārah, are intended to convey that the enlightened devotee of God, inasmuch as he entertains the same feeling towards all, neither recognizes anyone as his own nor identifies himself with his own body; yet he cherishes motiveless love for all beings and is compassionate towards all. Herein lies his greatness. Even the devotee who is yet on the way to God-realization can similarly show compassion and love to all; but he cannot be completely rid of 'I' and 'mine'.

The words 'Sukha' and 'Duḥkha', forming part of the compound 'Samaduḥkhasukhaḥ' do not stand here for the feelings of 'joy' and 'grief' but for the causes of 'joy' and 'grief' respectively. Men who are steeped in ignorance have an attachment for pleasure and aversion for pain; hence pleasure excites the feeling of joy and pain that of grief in their heart. But the enlightened devotee, having lost all distinction between pleasure and pain, never experiences joy and grief under any circumstance whatsoever. The Śruti also says: हर्षशोकौ जहाति—"the man of wisdom wholly abandons joy and grief." *(Kaṭha* I.ii.12). When as a result of evil destiny some ailment appears in his body, he will no doubt have the consciousness of suffering in the shape of bodily pain; and when his body is in sound health, he will have the consciousness of happiness in the form of absence of bodily pain. But, being free from likes and dislikes, he has no experience of joy and grief. Similarly, he will not experience joy and grief even when he is brought in contact with, or separated from, any agreeable or disagreeable object, or faced with any favourable or adverse circumstance. This is what is meant by his remaining balanced in pleasure and pain.

He who instead of seeking to punish the wrongdoer gives him security from fear is said to be forgiving by nature. The enlightened devotees of God possess an infinite store of forgiveness. Having come to realize all as so many manifestations of God, they do not in fact hold anyone to blame for any incident. That is why they do not seek to punish anyone for a wrong

done to them. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by speaking of his devotees as "forgiving by nature." The meaning of 'forgiveness' has been explained at length in the commentary on X.4 under the name of 'forbearance'.

The word 'Yogī' in this verse stands for the enlightened devotee who has realized God through the practice of devotion. Having directly perceived God, who is an inexhaustible and endless storehouse of supreme Bliss, such a devotee remains ever contented. At no time and under no circumstance does he grumble over the lack of any worldly possession. He has all his desires fulfilled; therefore, no incident of the world robs him of his contentment. This is what the Lord means by speaking of His devotee as 'ever-contented'.

The contentment enjoyed by worldly minded men is momentary; discontent reappears as soon as the object which brought them contentment by satisfying their desire disappears. That is why they cannot have perpetual contentment.

The body, senses and mind of the enlightened devotees of God are ever subject to their control. In other words, such devotees can never be swayed by their mind and senses. That is why they are not liable to any evil propensity or conduct. This is what the Lord means by speaking of His devotee as 'Yatātmā'.

'Dṛḍhaniścayaḥ' is he who has fully determined the true nature of God by his intellect, who directly feels the presence of God everywhere, and whose intellect can never and on no account be shaken from its conviction with regard to God due to change of mood, activity or painful experience etc.

As the devotee goes on constantly meditating on God through the mind, and determining His nature through the intellect, his mind and intellect get merged in Him for ever. This is what is meant by offering them to God.

To sum up, the enlightened devotee who cherishes motiveless and exclusive love for God, who is unshakably established in Him and is never disjoined from Him, whose mind and intellect stand dedicated to Him, to whom God is life, wealth, the vital breath and everything else, and who is mere puppet in His hands, is declared by the Lord as dear to Him.

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः॥ १५॥

यस्मात् from whom; लोकः (any) creature; न not; उद्विजते shrinks; च and; यः who; लोकात् from (any) creature; न not; उद्विजते shrinks; च and; यः who; हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैः from delight, envy, fear and perturbation etc.; मुक्तः (is) free; सः he; मे to Me; प्रियः (is) dear.

He who is not a source of annoyance to his fellow-creatures, and who in his turn does not feel vexed with fellow-creatures, and who is free from delight and envy perturbation and fear, is dear to Me. (15)

Realizing the presence of God everywhere, the devotee can never deliberately cause suffering, agony, fear and perturbation to anyone; on the otherhand, he is naturally inclined to render good offices to all, and to promote their best interests. Hence no one should ever feel annoyed with him. If anyone ever feels vexed with him through some error, it is the evil propensities of that individual in the shape of likes and dislikes

and jealousy etc., born of ignorance, that are mainly responsible for the feeling of vexation, and not the devotee himself. For the God-realized devotee, who is the very embodiment of compassion and love, and who is naturally disposed to do good to all, can never be a source of annoyance to anyone.

Again, the enlightened devotee who has realized God develops the feeling of oneness towards all. Therefore, he does not deliberately and of his own initiative behave in such a way as to provoke ill-will in others. That is why others too do not as a rule behave in a way which causes annoyance to him. Nonetheless, it cannot be asserted without fear of contradiction that no other being can ever be a source of bodily or mental suffering to him. Therefore, it should be definitely understood that the enlightened devotee too may under force of Prārabdha have occasions of sorrow and suffering at other's hands, but being completely free from likes and dislikes, he does not feel perturbed even in the face of the greatest calamity (VI.22). That is why the enlightened devotee never feels annoyed with any being whatesoever.

The first half of the verse merely says that the devotee does not feel annoyed or offended with any other being. Although this shuts out in his case the possibility of annoyance caused by another, it does not preclude the contingency of his feeling perturbed over and incident, or annoyed with an object, of his own seeking or with which he may be confronted without his seeking. Therefore, by reiterating in the second line the fact of his being free from perturbation, the Lord indicates that His devotee is never subject to any form of annoyance whatsoever.

Contact with an agreeable object sends a thrill into the body and excites a pleasurable sensation in the mind; while that with a disagreeable one causes irritation and annoyance. Thus, even through the absence of delight and perturbation itself is an indication of the devotee being free from all morbid feelings, it does not clearly bring out their total absence. Hence in order to make it definitely clear that the devotee is entirely free from all emotions, the Lord adds that he is free from envy and fear as well.

In fact, just as a man feels delighted on attaining the objects of his desire such as honour, fame, wealth etc., so should he feel delighted to see others obtaining those very objects in the same or even a greater measure than himself. But, instead of feeling delighted in such cases, people generally entertain a feeling of envy towards them. Even sensible men are found obsessed with this feeling. Similarly, contact with objects repugnant to one's liking as well as to the canons of morality and virtue is seen causing annoyance; while contact or even the possibility of contact with objects which, though consistent with morality and virtue, are yet conducive to sorrow and suffering is seen causing fear. To say nothing of others, fear of death overtakes even sensible men. The enlightened devotee of God, however, comes to realize the presence of God everywhere and recognizes all activities as a pastime of God; hence he is no longer subject to envy, perturbation or fear. This is what is meant by characterizing him as free from envy, perturbation and fear.

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः॥ १६॥

यः who; अनपेक्षः wanting nothing; शुचिः pure (both internally and externally); दक्षः clever; उदासीनः impartial; गतव्यथः free from distractions; सः that; सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी renouncing the feeling of doership in all undertakings; मद्भक्तः My devotee; मे to Me; प्रियः (is) dear.

He who wants nothing, who is both internally and externally pure, is clever and impartial, and has risen above all distractions, and who renounces the feeling of doership in all undertakings,—that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. (16)

The devotee who has realized God has absolutely no concern with any object whatsoever, that is why he does not entertain even the least desire, craving, or hidden bias for anything. He gets satiated. This is what is meant by speaking of him as 'Anapekṣaḥ'.

It may be contended here that no activity of any kind is possible in the absence of any desire or want, and without activity one cannot keep his body and soul together. How, then, does a devotee live ? Our reply to this question is that activity is possible even in the absence of desire or want under the impulse of Prārabdha or destiny; therefore, the life of a devotee is maintained by his Prārabdha. That is to say, the mind, speech and body of the devotee continue to perform all their functions automatically under the impulse of his Prārabdha without any desire, craving or volition on his part (IV.19). Hence the maintenance of his body presents no difficulty.

Purity finds its highest expression in the devotee. His mind, intellect, senses and body etc., become so pure that his very sight and touch lend purity to others, to say nothing of those who converse with him. The place where such a devotee resides attains a holy character; nay, the whole atmosphere and surroundings of the place, including land and water etc., are hallowed by his presence.

True cleverness lies in accomplishing the object for the realization of which human birth has been vouchsafed to us. The attainment of the primary object of human life consists in realizing God, the supreme lover, universal friend and Lord of the universe, through the practice of exclusive devotion. The enlightened devotee has been declared as 'clever' only in order to show that he has realized God.

Partiality consists in giving false evidence in a court of law delivering an unjust award in the capacity of an arbitrator or judge while adjudging or sitting in judgement over a dispute, or attempting in any other way to benefit or harm unduly one of the two contending parties out of regard for a kinsman, relative or friend, or out of malice or any other consideration. He who is free from such partiality is said to be 'impartial'.

The use of the adjectival compound 'Gatavyathaḥ' is intended to convey that the devotee does not feel distracted even when he has reason to feel distracted; that is to say, his mind does not give way to anxiety, sorrow or grief in any form or shape. The intention is to show that the devotee does, as a result of his Prārabdha, undergo sorrows and sufferings in the shape of a bodily ailment or loss of wife, children, house and wealth, etc; but notwithstanding all this, his mind remains unperturbed.

Whatever is happening in the world is a part of the divine play; it is the play of the deluding potency of God known as Māyā. He gets whomsoever He chooses to do whatever and whenever He likes. Man falsely arrogates to himself the credit for a particular action, and claims certain powers etc. A devotee of God, however, comes to realize this truth; hence he ever conceives

himself to be a puppet in His hands. He gladly plays whatever part the Lord desires him to play at a particular moment. Nursing not even the least taint of egoism within himself, he does nothing at all of his own accord. Hence, while doing everything in the eyes of the world, he is really a 'Sarvārambhaparityāgī' inasmuch as he is free from the feeling of doership in respect of all his undertakings.

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः॥ १७॥

यः who; न never; हृष्यति rejoices; न nor; द्वेष्टि hates; न nor; शोचति grieves; न nor again; काङ्क्षति desires; यः (and) who; शुभाशुभपरित्यागी (is) a relinquisher of both good and evil actions; सः that; भक्तिमान् man full of devotion; मे to Me; प्रियः (is) dear.

He who neither rejoices nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires and who renounces both good and evil actions and is full of devotion, is dear to Me. (17)

Attainment of a desired object and the parting of that which is unwelcome bring joy to all beings. Hence the negation of rejoicing here means the negation of joy resulting from the attainment of a desired object and from the parting of that which is unwelcome. The words 'Yo na hṛṣyati' are, therefore, intended to convey that the enlightened devotee never experiences joy on any account. To such a devotee, God alone, who is all-powerful, all-sustaining and supremely compassionate, is the highest object of love; and such a God stands ever realized by him. He is, therefore, ever immersed in supreme bliss. He does not entertain the least attraction or aversion for anything in this world. Thus there is nothing agreeable or disagreeable in his eyes and hence there can be no question of his feeling delighted on the attainment of a desired object and the disappearance of an unwelcome one.

Again, a devotee of God recognizes the entire universe as identical with God; hence he can never and on no account nurse any grudge against anybeing or object whatsover. The feeling of hatred totally disappears from his mind once for all.

As from joy, the devotee of God is immune from the feeling of grief as well. The attainment of an unwelcome object and the loss of that which is agreeable causes grief to all. The devotee of God, however, views every dispensation of the supremely merciful and sportive Lord as full of His grace; hence it never appears unfavourable to him. Knowing as he does the secret of divine sport, he remains ever absorbed in the realization of His supremely blissful nature. How, then, can there be any grief to him ? Besides this God alone, who is all-pervading and all-sustaining, is the best and dearest object of the devotee's heart, and he knows no separation from His Beloved; whereas the appearance and disappearance of worldly objects do not help or harm him in any way. That is further reason why he does not grieve over the loss of agreeable objects and contact with that which is unwelcome in the eyes of the world.

Man craves for those agreeable things which are missed by him. The devotee, having realized God, is eternally merged in supreme bliss and supreme repose, and is thus satiated. He never misses anything; all his wants disappear; and he gets established in an undisturbed state of mind. Hence there

remains no reason for him to crave for worldly objects.

The word 'Subha', forming part of the adjectival compound 'Śubhāśubhaparityāgī' stands for the performance of sacrifices, charity, penance and other activities enjoined by the Śāstras for the earning of one's livelihood and maintenance of the body according to one's grade in society and stage in life; while 'Aśubha' denotes sinful acts like telling a lie, practising duplicity, thieving, violence and adultery etc. The enlightened devotee of God renounces both these forms of action. For he offers to God all good actions performed through his body, senses and mind, and maintains not the least connection with them; nor does he entertain any attachment for such actions or the desire for their fruit. That is why such actions of his are not accounted as actions at all (IV.20). And since he has no likes and dislikes, he is never guilty of sinful acts. Hence the Lord speaks of him as having relinquished both good and evil actions.

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः॥ १८॥

शत्रौ to foe; **मित्रे** to friend; **च** as well as; **मानापमानयोः** to honour and ignominy; **समः** (is) alike; **च** and; **शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु** to heat and cold; pleasure and pain (and other contrary experiences); **समः** (is) balanced; **तथा** and; **सङ्गविवर्जितः** (is) free from attachment.

He who is alike to friend and foe, as well as to honour and ignominy, who remains balanced in heat and cold, pleasure and pain and other contrary experiences, and is free from attachment. (18)

Inasmuch as the devotee bears no ill will towards any creature whatsoever, there is no friend or foe in his eyes; yet people go the length of conceiving him as an enemy from their own point of view either because they foolishly imagine that he is doing them harm, or because his temperament does not appear agreeable to them, or because they bear jealousy towards him. Even so others regard him as a friend from their own point of view. But the devotee, who sees God everywhere throughout the universe, views all alike. There is no distinction of friend and foe in his eyes, and his conduct towards all is one of supreme love at all times. It becomes a part of his nature to serve all alike, regarding them as manifestations of God. Just as the tree makes no distinction between one who chops its limbs and another who waters its roots, and serves both equally with its shade, fruits and flowers etc. even so all distinctions disappear from the mind of the devotee. The undifferentiating attitude of the devotee is even superior to that of the tree. Since in the eyes of the devotee nothing exists apart from God, there is no room for differentiation in him. Hence he has been spoken of as alike to friend and foe.

Even though the devotee is alive to honour and ignominy, heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and other such agreeable or disagreeable experiences when his mind, senses and body go through such experiences, these latter do not at all arouse any morbid feelings in his mind in the shape of attraction and aversion or joy and grief etc. He remains equipoised under all circumstances. He neither craves for the agreeable nor recoils from the disagreeable; he never loses his balance of mind under any circumstance even in the smallest degree. As he sees God

everywhere, distinction totally disappears from his mind. It is with this idea that the devotee has been declared as balanced in all these contrary experiences.

Attachment or attraction for the world is the root of all evils. Even if a man externally gives up all connection with the world, but retains in his mind attachment for the same, such a renunciation cannot do him much good. On the other hand, when attachment has disappeared from the mind, there can be no harm even in maintaining, like King Janaka and others, outward, connection with the world without entertaining the senses of possession and attachment with regard to the same. In fact, he alone who has thus got rid of attachment is 'Sangavivarjitaḥ' in the real acceptance of the term. The same idea has been brought out in II.57. Hence 'Sangavivarjitaḥ' cannot be interpreted to mean one who has given up all connection with the world.

Verse 13 above speaks of the devotee as entertaining a friendly feeling towards all beings, whereas in the present verse he has been declared as free from attachment. Though these statements appear as mutually contradictory, in reality there is no contradiction between them. The feeling of friendliness which the devotee bears towards all beings is devoid of attachment, and is faultless and unadulterated. The love of worldly-minded men is rooted in attachment. That is why the two statements smack of contradiction on the face of it, although there is no real contradiction. Friendliness is a virtue, and God Himself is endowed with the same; whereas attachment is a weakness, and being the root of all vices, it is worth giving up. How can such a weakness exist in a devotee of God ?

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित्।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः॥ १९॥

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिः taking praise and reproach alike; मौनी given to contemplation; येन केनचित् with anything and everything; सन्तुष्टः (is) contented; अनिकेतः (is) devoid of the feeling of ownership and attachment in respect of one's dwelling-place; स्थिरमतिः stable of mind; भक्तिमान् full of devotion; नरः (that) man; मे Me; प्रियः (is) dear.

He who takes praise and reproach alike, and is given to contemplation and contented with any means of subsistence whatsoever, entertaining no sense of ownership and attachment in respect of his dwelling-place and full of devotion to Me, that man of stable mind is dear to Me. (19)

A devotee of God does not entertain the least identification with, or the feeling of 'mine' in respect of his name or body. Therefore, he neither delights in praise nor laments over reproach; he entertains the same feeling towards both. Realizing the presence of God everywhere, he makes not the least distinction between those who praise him and those who reproach him. This is what is meant by his taking praise and reproach alike.

The word 'Maunī' ordinarily means one who observes a vow of silence. But silence does not consist in merely holding one's tongue. For man speaks not only through his organ of speech, he goes on speaking even through the mind. Ceaselessly dwelling on the objects of the senses is what is meant by speaking through the mind. The mind of the devotee gets so deeply absorbed

in God that it thinks of nothing else than God; it is ever engrossed in His thought alone. This is silence in the real sense of the term. He who abstains from speech, and yet goes on dwelling on the objects of the senses, practises only outward silence. Even external silence practised with the object of emptying the mind of worldly thoughts purifying and controlling one's speech is profitable. But the present verse discusses the marks of the beloved devotee of God, whose speech is naturally flawless and restrained. Thus it cannot be said that he merely abstains from speech. On the other hand, the organ of speech of the devotee is almost incessantly engaged in chanting the names and glories of God, which is of supreme benefit to the world, Moreover, it is through His devotees that God propagates the cult of Devotion. Therefore, it cannot be conceived that the devotee who abstains from speech is dear to God, and not the one who makes use of his speech. In XVIII.68 and 69 he who propagates the message of the Gītā is declared by the Lord as one who renders the dearest service to Him. This noble mission cannot be undertaken by one who abstains from speech. Besides this, 'Mauna' appears once more in XVII.16 as forming part of mental penance. Had the word 'Mauna' been intended by the Lord to mean abstinence from speech, He would have mentioned it under the head of vocal penance. But He has not done so. This also proves that the word 'Mauna' denotes here silence of the mind, which is the characteristic of a Muni (sage). And he who is characterized by this qualification of a muni is a Maunī, or one given to contemplation. Abstinence from speech can be practised even wilfully, hence it is of no great importance either. Hence the word 'Mauna' should be interpreted here to mean the habit of contemplation, rather than abstinence from speech. Restraint of speech is naturally implied in this habit.

It is but natural and reasonable that the devotee who is exclusively devoted to contemplation on God, and whose mind is never crossed by any other thought, should not undertake any activity for the maintenance of his body, and that it is God alone who personally attends even to his worldly requirements and safeguards his worldly interests. Nevertheless, the word 'Yena Kenacit Santuṣṭaḥ' used with reference to the devotee do not imply that he abstains from disinterested and lawful activity for the maintenance of his body according to his grade in society and stage in life. They simply mean that the devotee remains contented with whatever he obtains as a result of such activity according to his Prārabdha or destiny. As a matter of fact, a devotee of God has nothing to do with the acquisition or loss of worldly objects. Having realized his most beloved Deity, he remains ever satisfied. Therefore, the intention of the words 'Yena Kenacit Santuṣṭaḥ' appears to be that the acquisition and loss of external objects cause no difference in his contentment. He remains reconciled to whatever he gets according to his Prārabdha, no matter whether it gives him objects of pleasure or pain.

He who has no house of his own is called 'Aniketa'. The word, therefore, primarily refers to those devotees of God who have renounced the life of a householder and adopted the life of a Saṁnyāsī or recluse. It also refers to those other devotees who, having offered all their possessions to God, have become wholly destitute, whose house and other immovable property, wealth and power, learning and intellect have all reverted to God, no matter whether they are celebates, householders or hermits. Just as an enlightened soul, who has no feeling of identification with or attachment to his

body, nor regards it as his own, is called bodiless (Videha) even though possessed of a body, in the same way he who has no attachment to his dwelling and does not regard it as his own is 'Aniketa' or without a dwelling even though living under a roof.

Due to his having realized God, all the doubts of a devotee disappear root and branch and he comes to have unwavering faith in Him. His resolve is firm and unshakable. Therefore, like ordinary men, he never turns away either from virtue or from God under the influence of morbid feelings like lust, anger, greed, infatuation and fear etc. That is why he has been spoken of as 'Sthiramatiḥ' (stable of mind). For further light on the implicaiton of this word the reader is referred to the commentary on II.55 to 72.

While discussing the marks of His beloved devotees in five groups in verses 13 to 19 above, the Lord repeats the assurance 'such a devotee is dear to Me' each time. In this connection it should be noted that all the marks discussed in the above verses are marks of the devotees of God, and they are all in agreement with the scriptures and highly commendable; but it is quite natural that the virtues and conduct even of devotees may slightly differ owing to the difference in their temperament etc. All the marks are not common to each and every devotee. Evenmindedness and tranquillity are no doubt common to all, and none of them is subject to morbid feelings like attraction and aversion, joy and grief etc. That is why we find some repetition in the above verses. A careful examination, however, will reveal that the feelings of attraction and aversion, as well as of joy and grief, have been negated either expressly or by implication in all the five groups. In the very first group 'Adveṣṭā' negates aversion, 'Nirmamaḥ', rules out attraction, and 'Samaduḥkhasukhaḥ' eliminates joy and grief. The second group negates the feelings of joy, anger, fear and perturbation; this automatically eliminates attraction and aversion as well as joy and grief. In the third group, 'Anapekṣaḥ' rules out attraction, 'Udāsīnaḥ' negates aversion, and 'Gatavyathaḥ', eliminates joy and grief. In the fourth group, 'Na Kāṅkṣati' negates attraction, 'Na Dveṣṭi' eliminates aversion, and 'Na Hṛṣyati Na Śocati' rules out joy and grief. Similarly, in the fifth or last group 'Sangavivarjitaḥ' and 'Santuṣṭaḥ, negate attraction and aversion respectively and 'Śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu Samaḥ' eliminates joy and grief. The word 'Santuṣṭaḥ, too occurs twice in this context. This proves that immunity from morbid feelings like attraction and aversion, joy and grief, etc., on the one hand, and the presence of positive virtues like evenmindedness and tranquillity, on the other, are indispensable in all cases. Other characteristics may slightly differ due to difference in the temperament of the devotee. It is because of this variation that the Lord has classified the devotees into five different categories and discussed their marks separately. He who possesses all the marks of even one of these groups is a devotee dear to the Lord.

Careful thought will reveal that the marks discussed in these verses are not the marks of those treading the path of Devotion, but of those perfect souls who have realized God through the practice of Devotion. For, in the first place, these marks have been discussed only after enunciating the means of God-realization and its rewards; and, secondly, they are analogous to the marks of saints who have transcended the Guṇas and realized the Truth, described in XIV.22 to 25. Hence they cannot be treated as the marks of those who are yet on the way to God-realization.

* * *

The chapter deals with the Yoga of devotion: that is why it has been given the title of Bhaktiyoga. Arjuna's query and the Lord's reply there to both deal with the subject of worship and it is for this very reason that the Lord repeats the dictum 'such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me.' This leads us to the conclusion that the marks mentioned in the above verses are the marks of those who have attained highest perfection through the practice of devotion.

It may be asked here: Does any line of demarcation continue to exist between those who have attained highest perfection through the path of Action, Devotion or Knowledge ? Our reply to this question is that although their actual state of realization or the supreme Truth realized by them is just the same, their conduct may continue to vary due to difference in their temperament. The statement of the Lord that "Even the wise man behaves in conformity with his own nature" (III.33) also proves that the conduct and disposition of all wise men continue to differ even after their enlightenment.

* * *

Absence of egoism and the sense of possession and immunity from the morbid feelings of attraction and aversion, joy and grief, lust and anger, etc., which are all born of ignorance, and the presence of even-mindedness and supreme tranquillity are found equally in all God-realized souls; but friendliness and compassion are the distinctive marks of the noble soul who has realized God through the path of Devotion. Even so indifference towards the world, towards one's own body and towards activity in general is a special characteristic of saints who have realized the supreme state by following the path of Knowledge. Similarly, activity without attachment and with due emphasis on self-control is the characteristic mark of those who have realized God through the practice of Karmayoga.

The marks of the saint who has realized God through the practice of Karmayoga have been discussed in a number of verses commencing from verse 55 and ending with verse 72 of Chapter II; the marks of the God-realized soul who has transcended the Guṇas through the path of Knowledge appear in XIV.22 to 25; and verses 13 to 19 of the present chapter describe the marks of the souls who has realized God by treading the path of devotion.

Describing thus the marks of the perfect devotee who has realized God, the Lord now extols, as extremely dear to Him, those devotees who, endowed with supreme faith and the spirit of self-surrender, most diligently scrupulously cultivate those qualities as model virtues, and thus concludes His reply to Arjuna's query contained in the opening verse of this chapter.

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते।
श्रद्दधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः॥ २०॥

तु but; ये who; श्रद्दधानाः endowed with faith; मत्परमाः solely devoted to Me; इदम् this; यथोक्तम् set forth above; धर्म्यामृतम् nectar of pious wisdom; पर्युपासते partake of in a disinterested way; ते those; भक्ताः devotees; मे to Me; अतीव extremely; प्रियाः dear.

Those devotees, however, who partake in a disinterested way of this nectar of pious wisdom set forth above, endowed with faith and solely devoted to Me, they are extremely dear to me. (20)

Verses 13 to 19 above discuss the marks of the perfect devotee who has realized God; whereas the present verse extols those noble devotees who are yet on the way to God-realization, and are thus different from the God-realized devotee, and who cultivate the above mentioned qualities of the latter as model virtues. It is this distinction which is intended to be brought out by the indeclinable 'Tu'.

The word 'Śraddadhānāḥ' stands for those who have reverent faith in the descents and utterances of the all-pervading and all-powerful Lord, as well as in His virtues, glory, supernatural power and stories etc., as in something directly perceived by his senses. And those who look upon the most loving and compassionate Lord as their highest goal and supreme refuge, nay, the very prop of their life and their all-in-all, are referred to here as 'Matparamāḥ'.

* * *

Really speaking, the marks of the God-realized devotee described in the forgoing seven verses constitute the true religion of humanity. The fulfilment of human existence lies in following the ideal of these devotees; for by following their ideal the Sādhaka is freed for ever from the cruel grasp of death and succeeds in realizing God, who is immortality itself. It is in order to bring out this idea that the above marks of the devotee have been spoken of as Dharmyāmṛta or the 'nectar of pious wisdom'.

* * *

The perfect devotee who has realized God is naturally endowed with the above attributes and becomes eternally one with Him. Hence the presence of these virtues in him is not to be wondered at. But it is really wonderful that those faithful devotees who have not yet realized God should nevertheless pin their faith in Him and solely depend on Him, offering with supreme reverence their body, mind, wealth and all other possessions to Him, nay, should remain constantly engaged in His loving remembrance with no other motive than His realization and should unceasingly endeavour to mould their life according to the above model. That is why such devotees are exeptionally dear to Him. God remains indebted to such loving devotees till He has satisfied them by conferring on them the privilege of constant association with Him: such is His esteem for these devotees. It is, therefore, but reasonable that the Lord should declare such devotees as even 'dearer' than the God-realized devotee.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे भक्तियोगो नाम
द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥ १२ ॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the twelfth chapter entitled "The Yoga of Devotion".

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter XIII

The 'Kṣetra' (body) and the 'Kṣetrajña' (soul) are entirely different from each other. It is only due to ignorance that they are being identified as it were.

Title of the Chapter

The 'Kṣetra' is material, mutable, transitory and perishable; whereas the 'Kṣetrajña' (knower of the Kṣetra) is conscious, of the same essence as Knowledge, immutable, eternal and imperishable. In the present chapter both the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña' have been differentiated in the above manner. Hence it has been given the name of "The Yoga of discrimination between the 'Kṣetra' and the knower of the Kṣetra."

Summary of the Chapter

The opening verse of this chapter defines what is 'Kṣetra' (body) and what is 'Kṣetrajña' (soul). Establishing the identity of the soul with the Oversoul, Verse 2 declares Wisdom to consist precisely in the knowledge of the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña. Undertaking, in the third, to describe the nature and characteristics etc., of the Kṣetra, as well as the nature and glory of the Kṣetrajña, and citing in the fourth the authority of the seers, the Vedas and the *Brahmasūtras,* the Lord discusses in the fifth and the sixth verses the nature of the Kṣetra and its evolutes. Verses 7 to 11 enumerate twenty Sāttvika traits and moral virtues such as 'absence of pride' etc., under the name of 'Jñāna' or wisdom, so called because they lead to the realization of Truth. Thereafter describing in verses 12 to 17 the nature of the Oversoul, which is capable of being realized through Knowledge, the Lord enumerates in verse 18 the topics discussed up to that point, and declares God-realization to be the fruit of 'Knowledge' as discussed in this context. Then, taking up another topic under the head of 'Prakṛti' (Matter) and 'Puruṣa' (Spirit), verses 19 to 22 discuss the nature of Matter and its evolutes, on the one hand, and the nature of and the truth about the Puruṣa or Spirit, on the other. Pointing out in the twenty-third the reward of knowing Prakṛti with its three Guṇas as well as the Puruṣa, the Lord describes in the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth the various means of God-realization. Declaring in the twenty-sixth the emanation of all beings, moving as well as motionless, from the union of the Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña, or Matter and Spirit, the Lord brings out in verses 27 to 30 the glory as well as the reward of realizing the truth that "God dwells equally in all, that He is imperishable and a non-doer, and that all action are done only by Nature, and that everything is a projection from the divine principle and abides in it." Driving home, from the thirty-first to the thirty-third, the glory of the Self and showing by the use of similes the non-agency and uncontaminated nature of the Soul, the Lord finally declares, in the thirty-fourth, God-realization as the reward of knowing the distinction between the 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña'.

In the opening verse of Chapter XII Arjuna asked the Lord about the comparative merit of the worshippers of God with attributes, on the one hand, and of those of God without attributes on the other. In reply to this query the Lord, while briefly showing in verse 2 the superiority of those who worship God with attributes, discussed from the third to the fifth the character and reward of the worship of the Absolute and the strain and stress involved in such worship in the case of those who are centred in the body. Thereafter, verses 6 to 20 discussed the glory, reward and process of worship of God with attributes and the marks of the devotees of God, and this brought the chapter to a close. The truth, glory and the means to the realization of the Absolute could not, however, be elaborately dealt with. Therefore, the truth relating to the absolute, formless God, or the subject of Jñānayoga, is being taken up for elaborate discussion in the present chapter. The beginning is made with a definition of 'Kṣetra' (body) and 'Kṣetrajña' (soul).

Link of the Discourse

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः॥ १॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; इदम् this; शरीरम् body; क्षेत्रम् इति as the Kṣetra (Field); अभिधीयते is termed; एतत् it; यः who; वेत्ति knows; तम् him; क्षेत्रज्ञ इति as the Kṣetrajña (Knower of the Field); तद्विदः knowers of the truth about them; प्राहुः speak of.

Śrī Bhagavān said: The body, Arjuna, is termed as the Field (Kṣetra); and him who knows it, the sages discerning the truth about both refer to as the knower of the Field (Kṣetrajña). (1)

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Idam' with reference to 'Śarīram' shows that the body is perceived and known by soul; hence it is objective, and thus entirely different from the Self, who is the subject. And just as seeds sown in a field yield the corresponding crop in course of time, even so seeds of Karma sown in the body yield their fruit at the appointed time. Hence the body is called the 'Field'. Besides this, it is subject to constant decay. That is another reason why it is called the 'Kṣetra' (from the root 'Kṣi' to decay); and that is why it is spoken of as the 'Kṣetra' (perishable) Puruṣa in Chapter XV. The denotation of 'Kṣetra' has been given in a nutshell in verse 5 of this chapter.

The latter half of this verse points to the inner Self, who is the subject. The entire range of objective reality, which is open to knowledge, such as the mind, intellect, the senses, the elements and the objects of senses—all these are material in their constitution, perishable and subject to change. The conscious Self is wholly different from the aforesaid material world of objective reality. It is the knower and lord of the latter and runs through it. That is why it is spoken of as the 'Kṣetrajña' or knower of the Field. It is this knowing conscious Self who is referred to as 'Parā Prakṛti' or the Higher Nature in Chapter VII, as 'Adhyātma' or the Spirit in VIII.3 and as the 'Akṣara Puruṣa' or Indestructible Soul in XV.16. This spiritual substance is a great mystery; that is why the Lord speaks of it in different contexts, now in the feminine gender, now in the neuter and a third time in the masculine gender. In reality, the soul is entirely free from all modifications, sexless, eternal, changeless

and conscious—of the same essence as Knowledge.

The pronoun 'Tat' forming part of the compound word 'Tadvidaḥ' stands for both the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña'. Hence the word 'Tadvidaḥ' refers to those who fully know both in their real character. The use of this word is intended to show that the appellation 'Kṣetrajña' has been given to the soul by sages who have realized the truth; hence there is no room for entertaining any doubt with regard to the nature of the soul.

Defining thus the words 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña', the Lord now establishes the identity of the soul with the Oversoul and defines Knowledge.

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम॥ २॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata; Arjuna; सर्वक्षेत्रेषु in all the Kṣetras or living organisms; क्षेत्रज्ञम् the Kṣetrajña or Self; अपि too; माम् Myself; विद्धि know; च and; क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः of the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña, (i.e., of Matter with its evolutes and the Spirit); यत् ज्ञानम् that which is knowledge; तत् that (is); ज्ञानम् wisdom or spiritual enlightenment; मम मतम् (that is) My view.

Know Myself to be the Kṣetrajña (individual soul) also in all the Kṣetras, Arjuna. And it is the knowledge of Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña (i.e., of Matter with its evolutes and the Spirit) which I consider as Wisdom. (2)

The first half of this verse establishes the identity of the soul with the Oversoul. As a matter of fact, there is no difference whatsoever between the soul and the Oversoul. The apparent difference is due to the association of the soul with matter. That is why while describing the characteristics of absolute, formless God XII.3, the Lord uses almost the same terminology as He did in II.24-25 while describing the character of the Self. What the Lord seeks to impress upon Arjuna is that the Kṣetrajña or the conscious soul seated in all the Kṣetras, being a particle of His own Self (XV.7), is not, in reality, different from Him; that it is God Himself who appears as the Jivātmā or individual soul.

The first half of this verse could as well be interpreted to mean that side by side with the individual soul the Oversoul also dwells in all the Kṣetras as the inner witness, in which case the sentence would have to be translated as under: "Know the Kṣetrajña (individual soul), as well as Myself, as dwelling in all Kṣetras or bodies." Such an interpretation would have been quite in order in a context where the emphasis was on Devotion. In the present context, however, the main theme is Jñāna or Self-realization; Bhakti or Devotion figures here only as a means to the attainment of Knowledge. Hence Bhakti has been assigned a secondary place in the scheme of this Chapter. Therefore, the way in which we have interpreted the verse as bringing out the identity of the soul with the Oversoul appears to be the correct interpretation.

The 'Kṣetra' or body is liable to appear and disappear, material in constitution, transient, coming within the purview of knowledge and ephemeral. The 'Kṣetrajña' or soul, on the other hand, is the eternal and conscious subject, immutable, stainless and ever existing in the same state of being. Hence the two are entirely different from one another; it is ignorance alone which

makes them appear as identical. In the opinion of the Lord, true Knowledge or wisdom consists in the realization of this truth. There is no room for doubt or error in this view.

The truth about the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña' being fully known, the delusion in the form of this world disappears and God-realization takes place; therefore, in order to bring out distinctly the ideas of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña', The Lord says:—

तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्क यद्विकारि यतश्च यत्।
स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु॥ ३॥

तत् that; क्षेत्रम् Kṣetra or body; यत् what; च and; यादृक् what like; च and; (again); यद्विकारि with what evolutes; च and (further); यतः whence; यत् (is) what; च and (finally); सः that (Kṣetrajña or soul); यः who; च and; यत्प्रभावः possessed of what glory; तत् (all) that; समासेन in brief; मे from Me; शृणु hear.

What that Kṣetra is and what it is like; and also what are its evolutes, again, whence is what, and also finally who that Kṣetrajña is and what his glory—hear all this from Me in a nutshell. (3)

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Tat' before 'Kṣetram', in this verse, is intended to show that the present verse undertakes to give further particulars about the 'Kṣetra' as defined in verse 1; while the relative adjective 'Yat' used as a predicate in relation to the substantive 'Kṣetram', conveys the intention of the Lord to reveal the denotation of 'Kṣetra', which has been given in verse 5 below. Again, the qualifying word 'Yādṛk', used with reference to 'Kṣetram', conveys the intention of the Lord to tell us what such 'Kṣetra' is like, and this has been pointed out in verses 26 and 27 of this chapter by declaring all created beings as liable to appear and disappear.

The evolutes of 'Kṣetra', referred to in the compound adjective 'Yadvikāri', have been enumerated in verse 6 of this chapter.

The words 'Yataḥ Yat' (whence is what) convey the intention of the Lord to trace the origin of the various categories brought together under the common name of 'Kṣetra', and this has been done in the second half of verse 19 and the first half of verse 20.

The demonstrative pronoun 'Saḥ' in the second half of this verse refers to the 'Kṣetrajña' and the relative adjective 'Yaḥ', used as a predicate in relation to it conveys the intention of the Lord to reveal its true character. This has been declared by the Lord as twofold, viz., (1) rooted in matter, and (2) existing in its real state. For example, speaking of it as 'without beginning' in verse 19, as 'undergoing pleasurable and painful experiences' in the twentieth, and as 'taking good and evil birth' in the twentyfirst, the Lord refers to the spirit as rooted in matter; while verse 22 and verses 27 to 30 revealing its identity with the Oversoul, refer to its real character.

The glory of the soul, referred to in the compound adjective 'Yatprabhāvaḥ' has been described in verses 31 to 33 of this chapter.

The Lord now expresses His regard for the Ṛṣis, the Vedas and the Brahmasūtras by quoting their authority on the subject of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña', which He has just now undertaken to discuss in brief.

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक्।
ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥ ४ ॥

ऋषिभिः by the Ṛṣis or seers; बहुधा in manifold ways; गीतम् (the truth about the Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña or Matter and Spirit) has been expounded; विविधैः छन्दोभिः in different Vedic chants; पृथक् (has been stated) separately; च and; विनिश्चितैः हेतुमद्भिः ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैः (discussed) in the conclusive and reasoned texts of the Brahmasūtras; एव as well.

The truth about the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña has been expounded by the seers in manifold ways; again, it has been separately stated in different Vedic chants and also in the conclusive and reasoned texts of the Brahmasūtras. (4)

The ancient seers, to whom the Vedic chants have been revealed, and who are the accredited authors of other scriptures and Smṛti texts, have expounded in detail and in various ways the true meaning of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' and all matters connected with them in the Smṛtis as well as in the Epics and Purāṇas. The sum and substance of what the Ṛṣis have said on the subject has been succinctly stated by the Lord in the following verses.

The word 'Chandobhiḥ', with the adjective 'Vividhaiḥ' qualifying it, refers to the four Vedas, Ṛk, Yajuṣ, Sāma and Atharva, including the Saṁhitā or hymnical texts as well as the exegetical portion, known by the name of the Brāhmaṇas. All the Upaniṣads should also be regarded as included in the same. The truth regarding the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña, stated in a nutshell in this chapter by the Lord, has been expounded at length at several places and in diverse ways in those sacred scriptures.

The compound word 'Brahmasūtra-padaiḥ' obviously refers to the famous "Aphorisms on Vedānta" by sage Bādarāyaṇa, opening with 'Athāto Brahmajijñāsā' (Now commences the enquiry into Brahma or the Absolute), inasmuch as the qualifications used with the word fit in quite well with this work. The latter half of the verse thus shows that the Lord is also giving here in a nutshell the very essence of the reasoned exposition contained in the *Brahmasūtras* of the truth about the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña', originally discussed in the Vedas and Smṛti-texts.

Citing thus the authority of the seers the Vedas and the Brahmasūtras, the Lord now speaks, in the following two verses, of the Kṣetra as well as its evolutes, referred to in verse 3 above by the words 'Yat' and 'Yadvikāri' respectively.

महाभूतान्यहङ्कारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च।
इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥ ५ ॥*

* Statements similar to this are met with both in the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa and the *Yoga-Sūtras of sage Patañjali e.g.,*

मूलप्रकृतिरविकृतिर्महदाद्याः प्रकृतिविकृतयः सप्त। षोडशकस्तु विकारो न प्रकृतिर्न विकृतिः पुरुषः॥

(Sāṅkhyakārikā, 3)

There is one Primordial Matter, which is the effect of none. The Mahat-Tattva (the principle of Cosmio Intelligence), Ahaṅkāra or the Ego and the five Tanmātrās (the Principles of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell)—these seven are both causes the effects; they are the causes of the five elements and the effects of Primordial Matter. The eleven Indriyas consisting of the five senses of perception, the

महाभूतानि the five elements; अहङ्कारः the ego; बुद्धिः the intellect; च and; अव्यक्तम् the Unmanifest or Primordial Matter; एव as well; च even so; दश इन्द्रियाणि the ten organs (of perception and action); एकम् the one mind; च and; पञ्च इन्द्रियगोचराः the five objects of senses.

The five elements, the ego, the intellect, the Unmanifest (Primordial Matter), the ten organs (of perception and action), the mind, and the five objects of sense (sound, touch, colour, taste and smell);— (5)

The word 'Mahābhūtāni' in this verse refers to the five Tanmātrās or the subtle states of the five elements, which are the causes of the five gross elements as well as of objects of perception, viz., sound, etc., and which have been enumerated in Chapter VII above under the names of 'Bhūmi', (earth), 'Āpaḥ' (water), 'Anala' (fire), 'Vāyu' (air) 'Kha' (ether).

'Ahaṅkāra' or the Ego is an aspect of the cosmic Mind. It is the cause of the five Tanmātrās, the mind and all the senses, and is an effect of the Mahat-Tattva. It is also known as the principle of 'I-ness' (the feeling of 'I').

'Buddhi', also known as the Mahat-Tattva and Cosmic Intelligence, is an aspect of the cosmic Mind, and represents the faculty of determination or judgment.

The word 'Avyakta' (Unmanifest) stands for Primordial Matter, which is the cause of all categories from Mahat-Tattva onwards, and is known by the name of 'Pradhāna' in Sāṅkhya philosophy, and which has been referred to as 'Mahad Brahma' in Chapter XIV and as 'Prakṛti' in verse 19 of the present chapter.

The tongue, hands, and feet, the generative organ and the organ of defecation—these are the five organs of action; while the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell constitute the five senses of perception. These are the ten Indriyas referred to in the latter half of this verse. The principle of Ego or Ahaṅkāra is the cause of them all.

The word 'Ekam' stands for the mind, which represents to cogitative faculty of the cosmic Mind, and whose function is to reflect and speculate. This is also an evolute of the Ego.

Sound, touch, colour, taste and smell, which are the objects of the five senses of perception, are denoted by the words 'Pañca Indriyagocarāḥ'.

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं सङ्घातश्चेतना धृतिः ।
एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥ ६ ॥

इच्छा desire; द्वेषः aversion; सुखम् pleasure; दुःखम् pain; सङ्घातः the physical body; चेतना

---

five organs of action and the mind, and the five gross elements—these sixteen are mere effects; they are not the causes of any other effect. Of these the eleven Indriyas are the effects of the ego, while the five gross elements are the evolutes of the five Tanmātrās. Puruṣa or the Spirit, however, is neither the cause nor the effect of anything else. He is altogether unattached.

In the *Yoga-Sūtras* we read: विशेषाविशेषलिङ्गमात्रालिङ्गानि गुणपर्वाणि (II.19) "The Viśeṣas, that is, the five senses of perception, the five organs of action, the mind and the five gross elements; the Aviśeṣas, that is, the ego and the five Tanmātrās the Liṅgamātra, that is, Mahat-Tattva; and the Aliṅga or Primordial Matter—these twentyfour categories represent the varying phases of the Guṇas. They are called 'Dṛśya' or objective existences".

What has been termed as 'Dṛśya' in the *Yoga-Sutras* has been referred to as the 'Kṣetra' in the Gītā.

consciousness; धृतिः (and) firmness; सविकारम् inclusive of evolutes; एतत् this; क्षेत्रम् Kṣetra; समासेन briefly; उदाहृतम् has been stated.

Also desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the physical body, consciousness, firmness: thus is the Kṣetra, with its evolutes, briefly stated. (6)

The word 'Icchā' in this verse denotes a passionate longing for the acquisition of an object which one regards as a source of gratification and as relieving one's pain. There are variours phases of this longing, which are covered by such expressions as desire, thirst, hope, craving, yearning etc. It is a modification of the mind; hence it has been reckoned as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

Antipathy towards a thing which one conceives to be a source of pain or as interfering with one's pleasure or comfort is called Dveṣa. Animosity, jealously, hatred, anger etc., are some of its gross forms. This is also a modification of the mind. Hence it has been counted as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

The pleasurable feeling aroused in the mind by the presence of that which is agreeable and the disappearance of that which is disagreeable is called Sukha. Being a modification of the mind, it is also regarded as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

The agony caused in the mind by the presence of that which is disagreeable and the disappearance of that which is agreeable is called 'Duḥkha'. This too represents a modification of the mind and as such has been recognized as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

'Saṅghāta' here stands for the corporeal or physical body, composed of the five gross elements, which is left behind, open to the view of all, even on the departure of the subtle body after death. Being a modification of the five gross elements stated above, it has also been regarded as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

The word 'Cetanā' signifies consciousness or the cognizing faculty of the mind, by which we feel pleasure and pain and cognize all other objects, and which has already been mentioned in X.22. Being a faculty of the mind, it has also been counted as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

'Dhṛti' denotes 'firmness'. It is the same quality which has been mentioned in XVIII.33, 34 and 35 as of three kinds, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, and the Sāttvika type of which has been included in the divine virtues enumerated in XVI.3. Being a modification of the mind, it has also been recognized as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

Thus far have the 'Kṣetra' and its evolutes been briefly mentioned, the former in verse 5 and the latter in the present one. This is what the Lord seeks to convey through the last quarter of the above verse.

Speaking thus of the nature of the 'Kṣetra' and its evolutes, the Lord now enumerates in the next five verses, under the name of 'Jñāna' the virtues which make for Jñāna or spiritual wisdom, which has been declared in verse 2 above as consisting in the knowledge of the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña'.

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम्।
आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ ७ ॥

अमानित्वम् absence of pride; अदम्भित्वम् freedom from hypocrisy; अहिंसा non-violence or non-infliction of pain on any creature whatsoever; क्षान्तिः forbearance; आर्जवम् straightness

of body, speech and mind; आचार्योपासनम् devout service of the preceptor; शौचम् purity (both internal and external); स्थैर्यम् steadfastness of mind; आत्मविनिग्रहः (and) control of body, mind and the senses.

Absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy, non-violence, forbearance, straightness of body, speech and mind, devout service of the preceptor, internal and external purity, steadfastness of mind and control of body, mind and the senses. (7)

'Mānitva' or self-esteem consists in looking upon oneself as an eminent person, and an object of reverence and worship or a towering personality, and coveting honour, fame, respect and adoration from others, or feeling delighted when all these come unasked for. And absence of all this is 'Amānitva' or absence of pride. Far from rejoicing when honour, respect and worship etc., are offered to him, the man who has fully developed this virtue feels disgusted with all these and grows indifferent towards them.

'Dambhitva' consists in exhibiting oneself as a devout or charitably-disposed man, a devotee, one possessed of spiritual enlightenment, or a saint, and in simulating piety, generosity, liberality, devotion to God, practice of Yoga and observance of religious vows and fasts etc., or any other virtue for the sake of honour, prestige and worship etc., out of greed for wealth or with the object of deceiving others. And 'Adambhitvam' denotes complete absence of 'Dambhitva'. Being entirely free from the desire for honour and fame, the man who has fully developed this virtue feels shy even in making known to others his genuine pious sentiments, noble virtues and devotional practices. It is, therefore, out of question for him to display virtues which he does not acutally possess.

'Ahiṁsā' means total abstenation from violence or infliction of pain in any form or shape on any creature whatsoever through body, speech or mind, e.g., harbouring ill-will towards another in one's mind; abusing or vilifying another, using harsh language, or uttering unpleasant and harmful words with reference to another; and dealing a physical blow or causing hurt to another or inflicting injury in any form whatsoever on others. The Sādhaka who has fully developed 'Ahiṁsā' ceases to bear enmity or ill-will towards anyone; therefore no harm is ever done by him to any creature whatsoever, nor is anyone eventually aggrieved by him, nor again does he actually cause fear to anyone. The great sage Patañjali goes so far as to say that even carnivorous animals living near him shed their natural animosities.*

'Kṣanti' means forbearance. He who has developed this quality never entertains the idea of punishing a wrong-doer even indirectly. He nurses no thought of revenge, nor would he have the evil-doer punished for his wrongs here or hereafter. In fact, he refuses to recognize his faults as such, and wholly forgets them. The idea has been explained at some length in the commentary on X.4.

'Ārjava' means straightness of mind, speech and behaviour. The Sādhaka who has fully developed this quality has straight dealings with all; crookedness is entirely absent in him. In other words, his dealings are wholly free from artifice, duplicity or dishonesty. He is ever straight and above board.

He who imparts knowledge and teaches good precepts is called an Ācārya. Living with such a teacher and devoutly striving in every way with body, speech and mind

* अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः । (*Yoga-Sūtras* II.35)

to bring him happiness, making obeisance to him, obeying his commands and behaving in conformity with his wishes—all this is included in 'Ācāryopāsana'.

'Śauca' means purity. Purity of money is secured by honest and truthful dealings, while purity of diet is ensured by food procured through well-earned money. Conduct is purified by correct and appropriate behaviour, and the body is purified by cleaning it with water, earth etc. All this is external purity. Internal purity comes when the mind gets purged of all evils such as partiality and prejudice, chicanery and dissimulation etc. Both these forms of purity are covered by the term 'Śauca'.

'Sthairya' denotes firmness, i.e., remaining unshaken even in the face of the greatest trials and tribulations, danger or sorrow, swerving not an inch in any case from one's sacred obligation and duty under the influence of lust, anger, fear or greed, and the disappearance of all fickleness from the mind and intellect.

The word 'Ātman', forming part of the compound word 'Ātmavinigraha', here stands for the body, including the mind and senses. 'Ātmavinigraha', therefore, means control over the mind, senses and the body. The mind, intellect and senses of the Sādhaka who has acquired complete mastery over his self act as his obedient servants; they can no longer entangle him into cobweb of sensuous pleasures, and remain constantly engaged in spiritual practice according to his will.

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहङ्कार एव च।
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥८॥

इन्द्रियार्थेषु towards the objects of enjoyment (of this world and the next); वैराग्यम् absence of attachment; च and; अनहङ्कारः absence of egotism; एव as well; जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् pondering again and again on the pain and evils inherent in birth, death, old age and disease etc.

Dispassion towards the objects of enjoyment of this world and the next, and also absence of egotism, pondering again and again on the pain and evils inherent in birth, death, old age and disease. (8)

'Indriyārtheṣu Vairāgyam' denotes complete absence of attachment for all the objects of enjoyment of this world and the next in the form of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell, which are relished by the mind and the senses, and which though ignorantly regarded as a source of delight are really productive of sorrow.

'Anahankāra' means complete absence of identification with the mind, intellect and the body, which though other than the self are ignorantly regarded as the self.

The pangs of birth are no ordinary pangs. First of all, the helpless Jīva undergoes various forms of suffering, for a considerable length of time, in the womb of the mother. Then, during the process of birth, it has to suffer unbearable pain while coming out of the womb. The Jīva has to go through these pangs in the course of repeated births in the various species of beings. Death also involves terrible sufferings to the Jīva. One has to leave under compulsion the body and the home which one has regarded as one's own for a whole life time. An idea of the agonies of death can be formed from the despondent looks and bodily suffering of a dying person. The sufferings of old age too are not

negligible; the organs get enfeebled, the senses lose their power, the body becomes worn out; the mind is ever tossed by longings of various kinds, and one is reduced to a helpless condition. The hardships undergone in such a state are indeed terrible. Even so the agonies of ailment too are extremely painful. The body gets emaciated, sufferings of various kinds become unbearable and one has to depend on others for so many things. It is indeed a helpless state. These are the various forms of suffering inherent in birth, death, old age and disease.

Birth, death, old age and disease are undergone by Jīvas as a result of their sins. Hence they are all full of evils. Constantly dwelling on this idea is what is meant by seeing evils in them.

As a matter of fact with the exception of the conscious Self there is nothing in this world which is free from these four evils. A house is built, this constitutes its birth; a part of it is broken, this represents its diseased condition, the broken part is repaired, the evil is remedied; the house becomes old, this represents its old age; it is now past repairs. Reaching the state of dilapidation it collapses; this represents its death. All things, great and small, go through this process. Thus observing all objects of the world as subject to birth, death, old age and disease, one should cultivate dispassion towards them.

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ ९ ॥

पुत्रदारगृहादिषु to son, wife, home etc.; असक्तिः absence of attachment; अनभिष्वङ्गः absence of the feeling of mineness; च and; इष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु in favourable and unfavourable circumstances; नित्यम् समचित्तत्वम् constant equipoise of mind.

Absence of attachment and the feeling of mineness in respect of son, wife, home etc., and constant equipoise of mind both in favourable and unfavourable circumstances. (9)

Close association with one's wife and children, home and wealth etc., generally makes for special attachment to them. Even after one has developed dispassion towards ordinary objects of senses, this attachment for wife and son etc., often remains lurking behind. That is why absence of attachment for these has been separately and specially mentioned in this verse over and above dispassion towards objects of enjoyment, mentioned in verse 8 above, which ordinarily covers the absence of all forms of attachment.

The word 'Anabhiṣvanga' cannot be taken to mean 'absence of egotism' as the same has already been referred to in the preceding verse by the term 'Anahankāra'. It is the feeling of mineness which is responsible for close identification with one's wife and children etc. That is why the joys and sorrows, as well as the gain and loss, of the latter make one personally happy and unhappy. This identification can be set aside only by overcoming the feeling of mineness. Hence the sense in which we have interpreted the word 'Anabhiṣvanga' seems to be the correct sense of the term.

Contact with agreeable persons, actions, events and objects and the disappearance of what is disagreeable is welcome (Iṣṭa) to all. Similarly, the disappearance of what is agreeable, and contact with what is disagreeable is 'unwelcome' (Aniṣṭa) to all. Absence of joy in the presence of what is agreeable and on the disappearance

of what is disagreeable, and absence of grief, fear and anger in the presence of what is disagreeable and on the disappearance of what is agreeable, that is, remaining unmoved, even-tempered and equipoised under all circumstances—this is what is meant by 'equipoise of mind both in favourable and unfavourable circumstances'.

मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी।
विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ १० ॥

मयि to Me (the supreme Lord); **अनन्ययोगेन** through exclusive attachment of mind; **अव्यभिचारिणी** unflinching; **भक्तिः** devotion; **च** and; **विविक्तदेशसेवित्वम्** living in secluded and holy places; **जनसंसदि** in the company of men; **अरतिः** absence of enjoyment;

Unflinching devotion to Me through exclusive attachment, living in secluded and holy places, and finding no enjoyment in the company of sensual men; (10)

'Ananyayoga' means getting exclusively united with God as the highest of all beings and as one's sole lord, worth resorting to, the supreme goal, the highest refuge, one's father, mother, brother and friend, the greatest benefactor, the nearest relation and everything, and treating nobody else as one's own. And cultivating steady, consummate and unadulterated love for God conceived as above and practising constant remembrance of and meditation on Him is what is meant by unflinching devotion to Him through exclusive attachment.

The man who practises such devotion ceases to have any trace of selfishness or egotism in him and he no longer claims anything belonging to this world as his own. He is connected with the world only through God, he ceases to have any direct relation with anybody. He views everything as belonging to God, and is constantly engaged in meditating on God in a disinterested spirit with reverence and love. Whatever he does, he does for the sake of God.

Any secluded, lonely and consecrated place, e.g., a temple or seat of religious austerity, that bank of a holy river like the Ganges, a sacred woodland or mountaincave etc., which is free from bustle and noise and is uninhabited by others, which when used as a residence evokes no objection and causes no vexation to others, which is free from dirt, refuse, pebbles and thorns, which has lovely natural surroundings which has a salubrious climate and a holy atmosphere, which is free from infectious diseases, and is not infested by carnivorous animals, and which is free from violence and surcharged with Sāttvika vibrations, is called 'Viviktadeśa'; and residing in such a place with the object of carrying on practices for Self-realization is what is referred to here as 'Viviktadeśasevitvam'.

The word 'Janasaṁsadi' in present context means the company of men steeped in error and attached to worldly enjoyments. And abhorring such company as a positive hindrance to spiritual life is what is meant by finding no enjoyment in the company of men. Association with saints, exalted souls and aspirants, on the other hand, is helpful to spiritual practice; therefore, 'Janasaṁsadi' should not be taken to refer to the company of such men.

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम्।
एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा॥ ११ ॥

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वम् fixity in self-knowledge; तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् seeing (God as) the object of true knowledge; एतत् (all) this; ज्ञानम् (is) Knowledge; यत् (and) what (is); अतः than this; अन्यथा other; अज्ञानम् (is) ignorance; इति thus; प्रोक्तम् has been said.

Fixity in self-knowledge and seeing God as the object of true knowledge; all this is declared as knowledge; and what is antithesis to it is called ignorance. (11)

The Self or spirit is eternal, conscious changeless and imperishable. All other objects which appear as perishable, material and subject to modification and change are not-Self; the Self has absolutely no relation with them. 'Adhyātma-Jñāna' or self-knowledge consists in thus realizing the truth of the Self through the scriptures and teachings of the preceptor. And conclusively determining this truth by the intellect, and dwelling on it constantly with the mind is what is meant by "fixity in self-knowledge."

The object of true knowledge is the integral Brahma or God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified; for it is He who is realized through such knowledge. Constantly visualizing that transcendent Reality as equally present everywhere is what is meant by "seeing the object of true knowledge."

The virtues enumerated in the preceding verses, from 'Amānitvam' in verse 7 to 'Tattvajñānārthadarśanam' in the present one, are all conducive to the attainment of Knowledge; therefore they have also been given the name of Knowledge. The intention of this is to make it clear that the statement of the Lord contained in verse 2 above, viz., that the knowledge of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' is what He considers as true knowledge, should not lead the reader to think that having understood that 'Kṣetra' stands for the body and 'Kṣetrajña' denotes the indwelling subject or self, he has attained true knowledge. On the other hand, true knowledge is that which follows the realization of the truth about 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' attained through the practice of the twenty virtues mentioned above. It is in order to reveal this truth to the reader that these virtues have been declared as synonymous with Knowledge. Thus an enlightened soul must possess these virtues from the very start. It is, however, not indispensable that all these qualities should appear simultaneously in all Sādhakas. Of course, many of these virtues, which are useful to all, e.g., absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy etc., are invariably present in every case. Other virtues, such as 'unflinching devotion', 'living in seclusion', 'fixity in self-knowledge', 'seeing God as the object of true knowledge' etc., may be optional according to the mode of discipline followed by a Sādhaka.

The opposites of these virtues, viz., lust for honour and glory, hypocrisy, violence, anger, duplicity, crookedness, malice, impurity, fickleness, covetousness, attachment, egotism, the sense of mineness, differentiation, impiety, association with evil man and other such evil propensities are conducive to the growth of ignorance, which is the cause of birth and death, and degrade the soul. Hence they are the same as ignorance and as such should be totally abandoned.

Hearing thus of the means to knowledge under the appellation of Knowledge, one may ask: What is that which should be known through the Knowledge acquired by such means, and what is the result of that Knowledge ? Anticipating this question, the Lord undertakes to describe the object of Knowledge and, holding out the "attainment of immortality" as its reward, devotes the next six verses to a description of God, the object of Knowledge.

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते ।
अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥ १२ ॥

यत् which; ज्ञेयम् (is) worth knowing; यत् (and) which; ज्ञात्वा having known; अमृतम् supreme bliss; अश्नुते one attains; तत् that; प्रवक्ष्यामि I shall speak at length about; तत् that; अनादिमत् ruling over beginningless entities; परम् supreme; ब्रह्म Brahma (Absolute); न neither; सत् being; न nor; असत् non-being; उच्यते is declared.

I shall speak to you at length about that which ought to be known, and knowing which one attains supreme Bliss. That supreme Brahma, who is the lord of beginningless entities, is said to be neither Sat (being) nor Asat (non-being). (12)

The word 'Jñeyam' in this verse stands for Brahma or God, both absolute and qualified, who is all truth, all consciousness and all bliss; for, in this very context, the Lord speaks of this object of knowledge as both attributeless and as the enjoyer of attributes or modes of Prakṛti.

The word 'Amṛta' denotes God who is an embodiment of supreme bliss. The intention is to show that through the knowledge of the supreme Brahma or God, who is the only object worth knowing, man gets freed for all time from the bondage of mundane existence in the form of repeated births and deaths, and attains supreme Bliss. It is this supreme Bliss which is also spoken of as attainment of the supreme goal or the supreme state.

In verse 19 of this very chapter, the Lord speaks of both Prakṛti (Matter) and the individual soul as beginningless. Being the Lord of both, the supreme Brahma or the supreme Puruṣa has been referred to here as 'Anādimat' (holding sway over beginningless entities).

The use of the word 'Brahma' qualified by the adjective 'Param', is intended to show that the object of Knowledge referred to here is no other than the absolute, formless Brahma or God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. The word 'Brahma' can also be taken to denote the Vedas, Brahmā (the Creator) and Prakṛti; hence it has been qualified by the adjective 'Param' in order to show that the object of Knowledge spoken of in this verse is something different from all these.

That which is established by proof is called 'Sat' (being). The existence of God, who is eternal and imperishable and stands self-proved, cannot be established by any proof; for all derive their existence from God, who is beyond all proof, Śruti also says: "How can that knowing subject be known?" He is entirely different from objects which can be known through various means of cognition; hence God cannot be called 'Sat'. And that which has no existence in reality is spoken of as 'Asat' (non-being); but it is not true to say that the supreme Brahma or God has no existence. He surely exists; nay, the existence of all else is proved by His existence. Hence He cannot be called 'Asat' (non-being) either. That is why God is beyond both 'Sat' (being) and 'Asat' (non-being).

In IX.19 the Lord said that He was 'being' and 'non-being' both; whereas in the present verse He says that God, who is the only object worth knowing, is neither 'Sat' (being) nor 'Asat' (non-being). Although the above two statements appear as

contradictory, the contradiction is more apparent than real. For when a positive assertion is made with reference to God, it is stated that all that exists is Brahma; and when an attempt is made to describe Him by the negative method, it is said that He is 'neither this nor that', but that He certainly is. In the previous statement a positive assertion is made with regard to God; hence it was but reasonable for the Lord to say, "I am being and non-being both." But, truly speaking, words cannot describe the real character of God either by the positive or by the negative method. Whatever is said about Him is only intended to serve as a hint just as we try to locate the new moon with the help of a bough which appears adjacent to it; words are utterly incapable of representing His true character. Śruti also says:—

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह।

"Failing to reach Whom, speech together with the mind returneth (that is Brahma)." (*Tait up.* II.9) It is in order to bring this out clearly that in the present verse the Lord negatively describes God as neither 'Sat' (being) nor 'Asat' (non-being). He means to say that the true character of the object of knowledge sought to be described by Him is beyond the ken of mind or speech; therefore, whatever will be said about Him should be taken to be only a faint indication of His character and nothing more.

Undertaking thus to describe the reality of what is worth knowing (Jñeya), the Lord briefly described that truth; but the truth of that object of Knowledge is deeply profound. Hence, in order to give an idea of that truth to the Sādhaka the Lord further describes it in detail through such attributes as 'all-pervasiveness', etc.

सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम्।
सर्वतःश्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ १३ ॥

तत् It (is); सर्वतःपाणिपादम् having hands and feet on all sides; सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् having eyes, heads and faces in all directions; सर्वतःश्रुतिमत् (and) having ears all round; लोके (for) in the universe; सर्वम् all; आवृत्य pervading; तिष्ठति It stands.

It has hands and feet on all sides, eyes, head and mouth in all directions, and ears all round; for It stands pervading all in the universe. (13)

The assertion that God has hands on all sides signifies that He is capable of accepting an offering wherever it is offered to Him. Similarly, the statement that He has feet everywhere implies that He accepts the prostrations made at His feet by a devotee wherever he offers them. For, omnipotent as He is, He can perform the function of all His senses and other faculties everywhere. His grasping faculty and moving faculty are all-pervasive.

The statement that "He has eyes, head and mouth in all directions", also shows the all-pervasive character of that which is worth knowing. Since he has eyes everywhere, there is no space where His eyes do not function; hence nothing is hidden from His view. Inasmuch as He has His Head everywhere, flowers etc., placed on His head by the devotees as a mark of honour reach His head wherever they are offered; there is no place devoid of His head. Having His mouth everywhere, He can accept an article of food wherever His devotees offer it to Him; there is no place where His mouth does not exist. In other words, God, who

is the only object worth knowing, is the Witness of all, is all-seeing, and is capable of accepting the homage and offerings of all.

The statement that "He has ears all round" likewise describes the all-pervasiveness of God. It means that He can hear everywhere. Wherever His devotees offer Him praises or prayers or make entreaties to Him, He clearly hears them all.

The concluding assertion that "He stands pervading all in the universe" also proves in a comprehensive sense the all-pervasive character of that which is worth knowing. Just as ether, being the cause of air, fire, water and earth, stands pervading all those elements, even so God, being the cause of the entire universe consisting of the animate and inanimate creation, stands pervading them all. Therefore, everything is full of God.

Speaking of God as having His hand's and feet and all other senses capable of functioning everywhere, the Lord now proceeds to establish the transcendent character of His being.

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम्।
असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च॥ १४॥

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासम् perceiving all sense-objects; **सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम्** (it is really speaking) devoid of all senses; **च** and; **असक्तम्** (though) unattached; **सर्वभृत्** (is) the sustainer of all; **एव** nonetheless; **च** and (again); **निर्गुणम्** (though) attributeless; **गुणभोक्तृ** (is yet) the enjoyer of qualities or modes of Prakṛti.

Though perceiving all sense-objects It is, really speaking, devoid of all senses. Nay, though unattached, it is the sustainer of all nonetheless; and though attributeless, It is the enjoyer of qualities (the three modes of Prakṛti). (14)

The first half of this verse shows that even the qualified aspect of God, who is the only object worth knowing, is exceptionally marvellous and transcendent in character. That is to say, the assertion made in verse 13 above that he has hand and feet and all other senses functioning everywhere, should not lead one to think that He has hands and feet and other organs analogous to those of other living beings. Though altogether devoid of such senses. He is capable of perceiving the respective objects of those senses. That is why He has been declared as having all the senses everywhere and yet devoid of all senses. Śruti also says:—

"He (God) grasps and rapidly moves without hands and feet; he sees without eyes and hears without ears." *(Śve. Up.* III.19.)*

Hence He is possessed of a transcendent character; this is what is sought to be conveyed in the present and the following two verses.

The assertion that "though unattached, He is the sustainer of all" shows that, unlike worldly parents who maintain and support their family out of attachment for the latter, God or the supreme Brahma sustains and nourishes all without any attachment. That is why He has been spoken of as the disinterested friend and benefactor of all beings (V.29). In other words, God, who is all-pervading and the only object worth knowing, is entirely free from the taint of attachment. Yet He sustains and nourishes all due to His contact with Prakṛti. Herein lies His transcendence.

* अपाणिपादो जवनो ग्रहीता पश्यत्यचक्षुः स शृणोत्यकर्णः।

The concluding statement that "though really beyond all attributes, God is the enjoyer of qualities" also establishes His transcendent character. The intention is to show that, though enjoying all qualities or modes of Prakṛti, God is never tainted by the modes of Prakṛti even as other beings are. Though in reality He is entirely beyond the modes of Prakṛti, He is yet the enjoyer of all qualities by reason of His contact with Prakṛti. This is another example of His transcendence.

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत्॥ १५॥

भूतानाम् बहिः अन्तः (It exists) without and within all beings (both animate and inanimate); **च** and; **चरम्** (It is) animate; **अचरम्** (and) inanimate; **एव** as well; **च** and; **तत्** It; **सूक्ष्मत्वात्** by reason of Its subtlety; **अविज्ञेयम्** (is) incomprehensible; **च** and (finally); **अन्तिके** close at hand; **च** as well as; **दूरस्थम्** standing afar; **तत्** (is) That.

It exists without and within all beings, and constitutes the animate and inanimate creation as well. And by reason of Its subtlety. It is incomprehensible; It is close at hand stands afar too.* (15)

Just as an iceberg floating in the sea is pervaded, both inside and outside, by water, even so all animate and inanimate beings are pervaded, both inside and outside, by God, who is the only object worth knowing.

The above statement that God exists both within and without all animate and inanimate beings should not lead anyone to imagine that the animate and inanimate creation itself is something different from Him. In order to make this clear, the Lord further says that the animate and inanimate creation too constitutes His being. That is to say, just as a block of floating ice has water both within and without, and the ice is really the same as water and nothing but water, even so the whole animate and inanimate creation is the same as God and nothing but God.

One may ask here: If everything is God, how is it that all people do not know Him? Anticipating this query, the Lord further says that just as the common people cannot perceive the molecules of water existing in the sun's rays,—they find it hard to perceive those molecules,—even so the all-pervading supreme Brahma or God, being far subtler even than the molecules of water, beats the comprehension of the common people and is thus incomprehensible.

There is no space within or without this entire universe, where, God is not. Hence He is too near and far as well; for God, who is Consciousness and Bliss solidified, ever fills all places which man regards as distant and near. Hence He is too near to those reverent soul who know this truth; while He is far away to the irreverent.

* Śruti also says:—

तदेजति तन्नैजति तद्दूरे तद्वन्तिके। तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः॥

(*Īśa. Up.* 5)

"It moves and it does not move; it is far and it is near too. It is within this all as well as without the entire creation".

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम्।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च॥ १६॥

अविभक्तम् (in its undivided aspect) integral like space; च and yet; भूतेषु in (all) beings (both animate and inanimate); विभक्तम् divided; इव as it were; स्थितम् appears to stand; च and; तत् that; ज्ञेयम् God, who is the only object worth knowing; भूतभर्तृ (is) the sustainer and nourisher of beings (as Viṣṇu); च and; ग्रसिष्णु the destroyer (as Rudra); च and; प्रभविष्णु the creator of all (as Brahmā).

Though integral Like space in Its undivided aspect. It appears divided as it were in all animate and inanimate beings. And that Godhead, which is the only object worth knowing, is the sustainer of beings (as Viṣṇu), the destroyer (as Rudra) and the creator of all (as Brahmā). (16)

The first line of this verse establishes the unity of God, who is the only object worth knowing. Just as the all pervading space, though really one and indivisible, appears divided as it were because of its being enclosed by different pots, even so God, though really undivided, appears divided as it were in the form of the 'Kṣetrajña', residing in all beings, both animate and inanimate. This diversity is only apparent; in reality, God is one, and He fills all space.

The latter half of this verse shows that Almighty God, who is the only object worth knowing, is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the entire creation, both animate and inanimate, and performs these functions in three different forms. In other words, He alone is Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम्॥ १७॥

तत् that (supreme Brahma); ज्योतिषाम् of lights; अपि even; ज्योतिः the light; तमसः परम् (and) entirely beyond Māyā (Illusion); उच्यते is said (to be); ज्ञानम् (It is) Knowledge itself; ज्ञेयम् worth knowing; ज्ञानगम्यम् (and) worth attaining through real wisdom; सर्वस्य of all; हृदि in the heart; विष्ठितम् (is) particularly seated.

That supreme Brahma is said to be the light of all lights, and entirely beyond Māyā. That godhead is Knowledge itself, worth knowing, and worth attaining through real wisdom, and is particularly seated in the heart of all. (17)

The godhead referred to above is the illuminator of all external lights such as the sun, moon, lightning and stars, of all psychic lights viz., the intellect, mind and senses etc., and of all celestial lights in the shape of deities presiding over the different worlds and objects. Even the power of illumination inherent in all these is only a fraction of God. That is why He is the light of all lights, that is, the illuminator of all, the source of all light; He is illuminated by none. Śruti also says:— "Neither the sun nor the moon, nor stars shine in that realm; nor again does lightning flash there. How, then, can this fire shed its lustre ? All these reflect His light; all this borrows its light from His."

(*Kaṭhopaniṣad* II.ii.15 and *Śve. Up.*, VI.14)* The Gītā also says in XV.12 that "the light in the sun, which illumines the entire universe, and that which exists in the moon and in the fire, know it to be My effulgence."

The word 'Tamasaḥ' in this verse stands for darkness and ignorance. And the godhead referred to here is self effulgent and Knowledge itself; Darkness and ignorance cannot exist near Him. Hence He has been spoken of as entirely beyond—altogether from—Māyā.

The word 'Jñānam' (Knowledge) denotes the essential nature of God. The use of this attribute shows that God is consciousness or Knowledge itself.

Again, the qualification 'Jñeya' used with reference to It is intended to reveal that the highest duty of man is to know God, the only object worth knowing the discussion of which has been commenced from verse 12 above. Hence it behoves all to exert themselves fully to know Its truth, rather than fritter away their precious lives in pursuit of worldly enjoyments.

The word 'Jñeyam' indicates that it is essential to know God. Here it may be asked: How is He to be known? Anticipating this query, the Lord says that He can be known by means of true wisdom acquired through the practice of virtues like 'absence of pride' etc., referred to in the foregoing verses as conducive to Knowledge. God should be known by acquiring true wisdom through the practice of the above virtues.

Although God is equally present everywhere, it is in the heart that He is particularly manifested. To take a homely illustration, the light of the sun, though diffused everywhere in a uniform degree, is particularly reflected in a mirror etc.; while it emits fire when reflected in a sun-stone. The reflection is not so strong in other objects. Even so the human heart is the seat of God's manifestation. In the heart of an illumined soul, of course, He stands directly manifested. It is in order to bring this out clearly that God has been spoken of as particularly seated in the hearts of all.

Thus briefly describing the true nature of the Kṣetra. Knowledge and the object worth knowing, the Lord now points out the reward, of knowing this subject.

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः।
मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते॥ १८॥

इति thus; क्षेत्रम् the Kṣetra (Field); तथा as well as; ज्ञानम् Knowledge; च and; ज्ञेयम् God (Who is) the only object worth knowing; समासतः in a nutshell; उक्तम् has been discussed; मद्भक्तः My devotee; एतत् this; विज्ञाय knowing in reality; मद्भावाय उपपद्यते enters into My Being.

Thus the truth of the Kṣetra and knowledge, as well as of the object worth knowing, God has been briefly discussed; knowing this in reality, My devotee enters into My Being. (18)

The true denotation of 'Kṣetra' along with its evolutes has been discussed in verses 5 and 6. The twenty accessories to Knowledge have been mentioned under the name of Knowledge in verses 7 to 11; while the true character of God, who is the only

* न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति॥

object worth knowing, has been discussed in verse 12 to 17 above.

The word 'Madbhaktaḥ' in this verse stands for the devotee of God engaged in the practices of devotion such as His adoration, meditation on His being, carrying out His commandments, worship and devotional service etc. The use of this word is intended to show that even the Sādhaka who treads the path of Knowledge can easily reach the supreme state by surrendering himself to God.

Realization of the fact that the 'Kṣetra' is an evolute of Prakṛti, unconscious, mutable, transient and perishable, resolute adoption of the virtues and practices conducive to Knowledge, and arriving through such means at a correct notion of both the Absolute and Qualified aspects of God—this is what is meant by knowing the 'Kṣetra', Knowledge and that which ought to be known. And realizing God, who is the only object worth knowing, is what is referred to here as entering into His Being.

In verse 3 above, the Lord invited Arjuna to hear in a nutshell four things with reference to the 'Kṣetra' and two things with regard to the 'Kṣetrajña' or the conscious subject. Then, after discussing at the very outset the true nature of the 'Kṣetra' and its evolutes, He incidentally enumerated the virtues and practices leading to a correct knowledge of the truth relating to the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña', and further discussed the true nature of God, who is the only object worth knowing. But He failed to point out the character of the 'Kṣetra' or to mention which particular effect follows from which cause; nor did He discuss the true nature of the Kṣetrajña and its glory. Therefore, in order to take up the thread of the discussion the Lord reverts to the topic under the name of 'Prakṛti' and 'Puruṣa' (Matter and Spirit). Declaring in this connection, first of all, the datelessness of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, He proclaims all modifications and qualities to be Nature-born.

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्ध्यनादी उभावपि।
विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसम्भवान्॥ १९॥

प्रकृतिम् Prakṛti (Matter); **च** and; **पुरुषम्** Puruṣa (Spirit); **उभौ** both; **एव** indeed; **अनादी** beginningless; **विद्धि** know; **च** and; **विकारान्** modifications (such as likes and dislikes); **च** and; **गुणान्** all objects of the nature of the three Guṇas; **अपि** too; **प्रकृतिसम्भवान्** born of Prakṛti; **एव** indeed; **विद्धि** know.

Prakṛti and Puruṣa, know both these as beginningless. And know all modifications such as likes and dislikes etc., and all objects constituted of the three Guṇas as born of Prakṛti. (19)

The word 'Prakṛti' in this verse stands for God's own primordial Nature, that has existed from time without beginning. It is no other than what has been spoken of as 'Mahad-Brahma' in Chapter XIV. Again, it is this very Prakṛti that has been referred to in VII.4-5 under the name of 'Aparā Prakṛti' or lower Nature, and as 'Kṣetra' in verse 5 above. The only difference is that whereas the above verses speak of this Primordial Prakṛti with her evolutes, viz., mind, intellect, ego and the five gross elements etc., the present verse treats of primordial Nature alone.

The use of the particles 'Ca' and 'Eva' is intended to convey that Prakṛti and Puruṣa

stand on the same footing so far as 'beginninglessness' is concerned, or that the two are identical in this respect. And the object of declaring both as 'without beginning' is to show that the Jīvahood of the Jīva, i.e., his association with Prakṛti is not something adventitious, but has existed from time without beginning, and even so this Prakṛti, which is God's own energy or potency, should be recognized as beginningless.

The word 'Vikārān' stands for modifications such as desire and aversion, joy and sorrow etc., enumerated in verse 6 of this very chapter; while 'Guṇān' stands for the three Guṇas, or modes of Prakṛti, viz., Sattva, Rajas, Tamas, and all material objects evolved therefrom. The intention of the Lord in declaring both these to be Nature-born is to show that Prakṛti is not synonymous with the three Guṇas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; it is something without beginning. In the beginning of creation, the three Guṇas are born of Prakṛti (*Srīmad Bhāgavata* II.v.22 and XI.xziv.5). It is in order to make this point clear that in XIV.5 the Lord mentions the three Guṇas by name and declares them as Nature-born. Again, in verse 5 of Chapter III, verse 40 of Chapter XVIII, and verse 21 of the present Chapter the Lord speaks of the three Guṇas as Nature-born. Verses 27 and 28 of Chapter III as well refer to the three Guṇas as evolutes of Prakṛti. Therefore, the three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—with their evolutes, and likewise all modifications should be recognized as born of Prakṛti or Nature.

In verse 3 above Arjuna was invited to hear whence is what, this has been partly discussed in the latter half of the preceding verse. Now, concluding the discussion in the first half of the next verse, the Lord discusses in the second half as well as in verse 21 the nature of the Puruṣa (Spirit) as seated in Prakṛti.

कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते।
पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते॥ २०॥

कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे in bringing forth the evolutes as well as the organs; हेतुः the cause; प्रकृतिः Prakṛti or Nature; उच्यते is said (to be); पुरुषः the individual soul; सुखदुःखानाम् of joys and sorrows; भोक्तृत्वे in the experience; हेतुः the cause; उच्यते is declared (to be).

Prakṛti is said to be responsible for bringing forth the evolutes and the instruments; while the individual soul is declared to be the cause of experience of joys and sorrows. (20)

The five subtle elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth, and the five objects of senses, viz., sound, touch, colour, taste and smell—these ten constitute what has been referred to as 'Kārya' in this verse. And the three internal or psychic organs, viz., the intellect, the ego and the mind, the five senses of perception, viz., the sense of hearing, the tactile sense, the senses of sight and taste and the olfactory sense, and the five organs of action, viz., the tongue, hands and feet, and the organs of generation and defecation—these thirteen are covered by the term 'Karaṇa'. It is from Prakṛti that these twentythree categories are evolved; Prakṛti alone is their material cause; hence Prakṛti has been declared to be the cause of their evolution.

The order of their evolution is as follows. Prakṛti gives rise to the Mahat-

Tattva (the principle of Cosmic Intelligence), from the Mahat-Tattva follows Ahaṅkāra (the Cosmic Ego), Ahaṅkāra brings forth the five Tanmātrās, mind and the ten organs of perception and action; and the five Tanmātrās in their turn are believed to evolve the five gross elements. This is borne out by the following verse (verse 22) of the Sāṅkhya-Kārikā:—

प्रकृतेर्महांस्ततोऽहंकारस्तस्माद् गणश्च षोडशकः।
तस्मादपि षोडशकात् पञ्चभ्यः पञ्चभूतानि॥

The Gītā speaks of the five subtle elements in place of the five Tanmātrās, while in place of the five gross elements it mentions the five objects of the senses. This is the only difference between the two versions.

In some editions of the Gītā, we find the word 'Kāraṇa' substituted for 'Karaṇa' in the present verse. If we accept this variant, the word 'Kārya' should be understood to stand for the following sixteen categories, viz., the five senses of perception. The five organs of action, mind and the five objects of senses; for they are all effects of some cause, and are not themselves the cause of others. And the word 'Kāraṇa' should be taken to cover the intellect, the ego and the five subtle elements. For the intellect is the cause of the ego; the ego is the cause of the mind senses and the five subtle elements; and the five subtle elements in their turn are the causes of the five objects of senses.

Although other scriptures recognize four aspects of the Antaḥkaraṇa or inner sense, viz., Buddhi (Intellect), Ahaṅkāra (Ego), Citta (the faculty of cogitation or reflection) and Manas (Mind), the Lord does not recognize Citta and Manas as two diverse faculties; he reckons them as only two names of one and the same faculty. The Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems also uphold the same view. That is why, instead of four, the Lord speaks here of only three aspect of the Mind or Antaḥkaraṇa.

Here it may be urged that the word 'Puruṣa' stands for the conscious Self or Ātmā, and the Self is regarded as stainless and pure; how, then, has the Puruṣa been declared as responsible for the experience of joys and sorrows? Our submission in this connection is that Prakṛti, being unconscious, cannot possibly have any experience of pleasure or pain; while the Puruṣa or Spirit is unattached, hence that too is not the experiencer really speaking. It is only through its contact with Prakṛti that the puruṣa appears to be the experiencer; and this contact between Puruṣa and Prakṛti has no beginning, hence the Puruṣa has been recognized as responsible for the experience of joys and sorrows. It is in order to make this point clear that the next verse explicitly says that it is the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti who senses objects of the nature of the three Guṇas evolved from Prakṛti. That is why the Puruṣa, weaned from Prakṛti, has no semblance of such experiences.

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान्।
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु॥ २१॥

प्रकृतिस्थः पुरुषः the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti; **हि** only; **प्रकृतिजान् गुणान्** objects of the nature of the three Guṇas evolved from Prakṛti; **भुङ्क्ते** senses; **गुणसङ्गः** contact with these Guṇas (alone); **अस्य** of this (embodied soul); **सदसद्योनिजन्मसु कारणम्** (is) responsible for birth in good and evil wombs.

Only the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti senses objects of the nature of the three Guṇas evolved from Prakṛti. And it is contact with these Guṇas that is responsible for the birth of this soul in good and evil wombs. (21)

The substantive 'Guṇān', qualified by 'Prakṛtijān', denotes the three qualities or modes, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, born of Prakṛti, as well as their evolutes, viz., all mundane objects of the nature of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. An individual soul is said to be seated in Prakṛti so long as it is invested with any of the three bodies—gross, subtle and causal—born of Prakṛti. That is why the self or Spirit senses the Nature-born qualities so long as it is associated with Prakṛti. It ceases to be the enjoyer on its being dissociated with Prakṛti; for, in reality, the Puruṣa is eternally detached in character.

The human and all other higher species, such as the celestial species and so on, are 'good' wombs; while all subhuman species, e.g., beasts, birds, trees and creepers etc., fall under the category of 'evil' wombs. Contact of the Jīva or embodied soul with the three Guṇas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, existing, from time without beginning, and his attachment for worldly objects which are the evolutes of those Guṇas is what is referred to as 'Guṇasaṅgaḥ'. The latent desires of a man are determined by his attachment for a particular Guṇa or its evolutes; and it is these latent desires which decide the nature of his rebirth. That is why contact with the Guṇas has been declared as responsible for one's birth in good or evil wombs.

In this connection it may be noted that in IV.13 the Lord claimed to have brought into being the four orders of society dividing people according to their qualities and actions. In VIII.6, He declared that whatever a man thinks of at the last moment before leaving his body, that very object he attains in his next life. And in the present verse He attributes one's birth in good or evil wombs to contact with the Guṇas. How are these versions to be reconciled ?

Our submission in this connection is that there is no incongruity whatsoever between these three statements. On closer examination all the three statements will be found in one way or other to attribute one's birth in good and evil wombs to contact with the Guṇas. (1) God evolves the four orders of society on the basis of the Guṇas and Karmas of each individual. In this division contact of the Jīvas with the Guṇas naturally operates as the determining factor. (2) Man develops special attachment for one of the three Guṇas according to the nature of his pursuits and the kind of company he keeps; and the inclinations or tendencies formed as a result of those actions are also of a cognate type. Again, his thought at the last moment of his life is determined by those proclivities and his birth in good or evil wombs is in its turn decided by his thought at the last moment. Hence contact with the Guṇas is the ultimate cause even of one's birth in good or evil wombs. (3) In the present verse, of course, contact with the Guṇas has been expressly stated to be the cause of such birth. Therefore, all the three statements bring out the same truth.

Having thus described the character of the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti the Lord now delineates the transcendent character of the Self, establishing identity between God and the individual soul at the same time.

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः।
परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः॥ २२॥

अस्मिन् देहे (dwelling) in this body; पुरुषः the Spirit; परः (is really the same as) the Supreme; उपद्रष्टा the seer or witness; च and; अनुमन्ता the (true) guide; भर्ता the sustainer; भोक्ता the experiencer (as the embodied soul); महेश्वरः the Overlord; च and; अपि also; परमात्मा the Absolute; इति as; उक्तः has been spoken of.

The Spirit dwelling in this body, is really the same as the Supreme. He has been spoken of as the Witness, the true Guide, the Sustainer of all, the Experiencer (as the embodied soul), the Overlord and the Absolute as well. (22)

The assertion that the Spirit dwelling in this body is realy the same as the Supreme indicates the transcendent character of the knowing Self. The intention is to say that the conscious Self, which on account of its being conditioned by bodies evolved from Prakṛti erroneously appears to have assumed an individual character, is, in reality, the same as the Supreme, who is entirely beyond this Prakṛti; for virtually there is no difference whatsoever between the supreme Eternal and the knowing subject. The diversity which appears to exist between the two is only due to the latter being limited by a body.

The same supreme Eternal is called by different names due to different causes. In reality and substance, however, there is no diversity in Brahma. Thus, for instance, as the inner controller of all He alone, observes the good and evil deeds of men: hence He is called "Upadraṣṭā' (Witness). The very same God, residing in the heart of all, gives proper advice to those who seek it; hence He is called 'Anumantā' or Guide. In the form of Viṣṇu He alone protects and sustains the whole universe; therefore, He is called the 'Bhartā' or 'Sustainer'. Again, it is He who, in the form of celestials, partakes of the oblations offered in all sacrifices, and in the form of various beings undergoes all sorts of experiences; hence He is called the 'Bhoktā' or Enjoyer. He alone is the supreme Lord ruling over gods or guardians of the world and even divine lords like Brahmā, the Creator; hence He is called by the name of 'Maheśvara' or the Overlord; and in reality, He ever remains entirely beyond the Guṇas; therefore, He is called the Paramātmā or Absolute. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the present verse.

Describing thus the character of Prakṛti together with the Guṇas, as also of the Puruṣa, the Lord now declares the reward of knowing them in reality.

य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते॥ २३॥

एवम् thus; पुरुषम् the Puruṣa or Spirit; च and; गुणैः सह together with the Guṇas; प्रकृतिम् Prakṛti or Nature; यः who; वेत्ति knows (in reality); सः he; सर्वथा in every way; वर्तमानः acting; अपि even; भूयः again; न not; अभिजायते is born.

He who thus knows the Puruṣa (Spirit) and Prakṛti (Nature) together with the Guṇas,—even though performing his duties in every way, is never born again. (23)

Knowledge of the Puruṣa consists in realizing the character and glory of the Puruṣa as delineated in this chapter. In other words, true realization of the fact that all knowing selves that appear to have a separate existence are identical with the supreme Eternal, that the diversity appearing in them is due to their contact with Prakṛti, really speaking there is no difference between them, and that God is eternal, pure, awakened, free, imperishable and wholly beyond Prakṛti, and to establish oneself in identity with that embodiment of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss once for all, is what is meant by 'knowing the Puruṣa in reality, And grasping the truth that the three Guṇas are evolutes of Prakṛti, that the whole universe is nothing but a projection of Prakṛti, and that it is perishable, unconscious, momentary and transient, is what is meant by 'knowing Prakṛti together with the Guṇas in reality.

The use of the indeclinable 'Api' with the words 'Sarvathā Vartamānaḥ' is intended to show that he who knows the Puruṣa and Prakṛti with the three Guṇas, as stated above, be he a Brāhmaṇa, a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya or a Śūdra, and to whatever Āśrama or stage in life (such as Brahmacarya etc.) he belongs, even though duly performing all the duties enjoined by the Śāstras for that particular caste and Āśrama, really does nothing and hence is never born again.

Since evils like lust and anger wholly cease to exist in an enlightened soul who has realized the Self (V.26), it is never possible for him to indulge in prohibited acts. That is why his conduct is recognized as standard (III.21). Hence the words 'Sarvathā Vartamānaḥ', followed by the indeclinable 'Api', cannot be interpreted to mean that such an enlightened soul is never born again even if he indulges in prohibited acts; for it is evil impulses like lust and anger that lead to sin. In reply to Arjuna's query, the Lord has expressly stated this in III.37.

The Puruṣa ceases to have anything to do with Prakṛti the moment he comes to know the truth about both; for their contact has been held to be imaginary, unreal and brought about by mere ignorance. The contact of the Puruṣa with Prakṛti and its Guṇas lasts only so long as they are not fully known and it is only till then that he continues to be born again and again in various species (XIII.21). That is why one is not reborn after knowing their true nature.

On hearing the glory of the Knowledge of Prakṛti with the three Guṇas and of the Puruṣa, one may be tempted to enquire how this knowledge may be gained. Therefore, in the next two verses, the Lord mentions various disciplines to be followed by men of different aptitudes for the realization of Truth.

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना।
अन्ये साङ्ख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे॥ २४॥

आत्मानम् the supreme Spirit or Self; केचित् some (men); आत्मना through (their refined and sharp) intellect; ध्यानेन by meditation; आत्मनि in the heart; पश्यन्ति behold; अन्ये (certain)

others; साङ्ख्येन योगेन through the discipline of Knowledge; च and; अपरे (still) others; कर्मयोगेन (behold It) through the discipline of Action.

Some by meditation behold the supreme Spirit in the heart with the help of their refined and sharp intellect; others realize It through the discipline of Knowledge, and others, again, through the discipline of Action. (24)

'Dhyāna' denotes constant meditation on God, practised in a clean and secluded spot in accordance with the procedure laid down in verses 11 to 13 of Chapter VI, i.e., firmly squatting on an appropriate seat, withdrawing the senses from their objects, controlling the mind and forgetting everything else than God. The intellect gets purified through such practice of meditation; and realizing the supreme Eternal, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, through such refined and sharp intellect within the heart is what is meant by beholding the Self by meditation in the self and through the self.

Verse 22 above has established identity between the soul and the Oversoul, and it is in the light of this identity that the Lord discusses the different forms of discipline for the attainment of the ultimate goal in the form of Realization of the Self. Therefore, judging from the context, the meditation referred to in this verse is meditation on the absolute, formless Brahma viewed as identical with one's self, and it is realization of God as identical with one's self that has been declared to be the reward of such meditation. But even those Sādhakas who meditate on the qualified Divinity with or without form as apart from themselves can realize the absolute formless Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified; as identical with one's self, if they seek such reward.

The words 'Sāṅkhyena' and 'Yogena', taken together, stand for Saṅkhyayoga or the discipline of Knowledge. This has been discussed at length in verses 11 to 30 of Chapter II, as also in verses 8,9 and 13 of Chapter V, in verse 19 of Chapter XIV and elsewhere according to context. Realizing that all material objects are nothing but illusion, like water in a mirage, or that which appears in a dream, so that it is only the Guṇas, which are born of Prakṛti, that react on the Guṇas, a follower of the path of Knowledge gives up the sense of doership in respect of all activities of the mind, senses and the body, and ever established in identity with the all-pervading God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, refuses to recognize the separate existence of anything other than God. And directly perceiving, through such practice, the identity of the soul with the Oversoul and thus realizing the Absolute, is what is meant by beholding the self in the self through the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga.

Sāṅkhyayoga can be easily practised only by a qualified soul who is endowed with the four equipments, viz., (1) Viveka or Discrimination, (2) Vairāgya or Dispassion, (3) Ṣaṭ Sampatti or the sixfold riches, and (4) Mumukṣutva, the quest for freedom.

1. VIVEKA

Discrimination between the real and the unreal, as well as between the eternal and the fleeting is called Viveka. Discriminaiton sifts the one from the other. Viveka is the same as realization of Truth. This consummation of Viveka is attained by constantly sifting the self from the non-self, under all circumstances, and in every object. When Viveka actually dawns, difference between the real and the unreal, between the eternal and the transient, beings to be

directly experienced as that between milk and water. The next equipage is:—

2. VAIRĀGYA

Once the real is sifted from the unreal, and the eternal from the passing, with the help of discrimination, attraction for the unreal and the passing naturally ceases. This is what they call Vairāgya. If the hankering for enjoyments persists in the mind and we make a show of aversion to and disgust for the world, that is no dispassion. There is total negation of Rāga or attachment in dispassion; Vairāgya, really speaking, is another name for mental detachment. The mind of those who develop true dispassion entirely cease to have any thirst or attachment for the various forms of enjoyment extending up to the abode of Brahmā (the Creator). Turning their back upon the unreal and the transient they remain constantly intent on the real and the eternal. This is what constitutes dispassion. So long as this type of dispassion does not appear Viveka should be regarded as deficient. When discrimination is complete, the awakening of dispassion is inevitable.

3. THE SIXFOLD RICHES

As a result of such discrimination and dispassion, the Sādhaka comes to acquire sixfold riches of the highest value. So long as this wealth is not fully acquired, discrimination and dispassion should be regarded as positively deficient; for when the Sādhaka is fully endowed with discrimination and dispassion, it is easy for him to acquire this wealth. This wealth is known by the name of 'Ṣaṭsampatti' (the sixfold riches) and the following are the six factors constituting it:—

1. *Śama*. Complete subjugation, quiescence and stillness of the mind is called Śama. When discrimination and dispassion are fully developed, the mind naturally becomes quiescent and still.

2. *Dama*. Complete mastery over the senses and their finding no relish in the objects of enjoyment is called Dama.

3. *Uparati*. Withdrawal of the mind from all worldly objects is known as 'Uparati'. When the mind and the senses cease to have any relish for the objects of enjoyment, the Sādhaka will naturally turn his back on them. This indifference must be cultivated with respect to every form of enjoyment,— not simply externally but internally. The mind should never think of even the rare pleasures of Brahmaloka or the seventh heaven with intent to enjoy them. This is what is known as Uparati.

4. *Titikṣā*. Titikṣā ordinarily means maintaining one's balance of mind in the face of Dvandvas or pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and ignominy; but the 'Titikṣā' which follows in the wake of Viveka, Vairāgya, Śama, Dama and Uparati must be something different from ordinary endurance as indicated above. The Dvandvas can neither cease in this world nor can any one wholly avoid them. Putting up with them anyhow is also quite good; but the best thing is to rise above the realm of contraries and to look on them as a dispassionate observer. Such indeed is Titikṣā in the real sense of the term. When this state is reached, heat and cold or honour and ignominy can no longer touch a man.

5. *Śraddhā*. Unceasing faith in the existence of the Self as in something directly perceived is called Śraddhā. Śraddhā, first of all, centers round the Śāstras or sacred books, the personality of the religious preceptor and spiritual practice etc.; faith in the self develops thereby. But so long as complete faith is not developed in the spiritual self, the intellect cannot get established in the one integral, stainless,

formless and attributeless Brahma as its goal.

6. *Samādhāna*. Samādhāna means total absorption of the mind and intellect in God. In other words, just as Arjuna, while demonstrating his skill in archery in the presence of Ācārya Droṇa, beholds only the neck of the dummy bird placed on a tree, even so when one's mind and intellect constantly perceive God alone as their sole objective, that is Samādhāna.

4. MUMUKṢUTVA

In this way when discrimination, dispassion and the sixfold virtues are acquired, the Sādhaka naturally seeks absolute freedom from the bondage of ignorance, and withdrawing his mind from everything else, and without looking in any other direction, runs exclusively after God. This running after God with the utmost speed on his part, i.e., his intense practice itself is an indication of his keenest desire to realize God. This is what they call 'Mumukṣutva' or the quest of liberation.

* * *

The word 'Karmayoga' in this verse stands for the course of discipline which has been discussed, along with its reward in Chapter II from verse 40 up to the end of the chapter. In other words, Karmayoga consists in performing all one's prescribed duties, appropriate to the Varṇa (grade in society) and Āśrama (stage in life) to which one belongs, according to the scriptural injunctions in a disinterested spirit, renouncing all attachment and reward, and treating success and failure alike. And realizing the supreme eternal Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, as one's own self through this discipline is what is meant by beholding the self in the self through Karmayoga.

Here it must be remembered that, even though maintaining this identity apart from God during the period of his Sādhanā, the Sādhaka who aims at unity in the end realizes Brahma as his own self. And the subject under discussion in this verse is to ascertain the practices through which God can be realized as one's own self. That is why this verse speaks of realizing the supreme eternal Spirit as one's own self even through the practice of Karmayoga.

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते।
तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः॥ २५॥

तु however; अन्ये others (viz., the dull-witted); एवम् thus; अजानन्तः not knowing; अन्येभ्यः from others (those who have realized the Truth); श्रुत्वा hearing; उपासते worship (accordingly); च and; ते those; श्रुतिपरायणाः (persons) given to hearing; अपि too; मृत्युम् the ocean of mundane existence in the shape of death; अतितरन्ति (are able to) cross; एव indeed.

Other dull witted persons, however, not knowing thus, worship even as they have heard from others; and even those who are thus devoted to hearing, are able to cross the ocean of mundane existence in the shape of death. **(25)**

The Particle 'Tu' in this verse indicates that the Lord now proceeds to speak of other Sādhakas different from those mentioned in the preceding verse. In other words, the present verse points out the way to the redemption of those who cannot fully grasp the spirit of the practices mentioned above.

The pronoun 'Anye', qualified by the

adjectival phrase 'Evam Ajānantaḥ', refers to those Sādhakas who are too dullwitted to grasp in full the spirit of any one of the practices mentioned in the preceding verse, viz., Dhyānayoga, Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga.

Satyakāma, son of Jabālā, approached the great sage Hāridrumata, who claimed his descent from Gautama, in quest of the knowledge of Brahma, Having had a talk with him, the teacher selected from his herd four hundred weak and extremely emaciated cows and asked Satyakāma to follow them. Driving them towards the forest, as enjoined by his preceptor, with great reverence, enthusiasm and joy, Satyakāma said, "I shall return when their number swells to a thousand." Taking them to a safe retreat abounding in herbage and water, he came back only when their number had swollen to a thousand. The result was that he attained God-realization while he was yet on his way back to his preceptor's hermitage (*Chāndogya,* IV.iv.9). Receiving instructions from such men of wisdom, who have realized the Truth, and carrying them out with extreme reverence and love is what is meant by 'worshipping even as they have heard from others.'

The compound adjective 'Śrutiparāyaṇāḥ' refers to those who take with reverence and love to the diligent practice of what they have heard. The use of the indeclinable 'Api' is intended to show that when even such men of small understanding are doubtless able to conquer death by worshipping as they have heard from others, there can be no doubt about the redemption of Sādhakas who follow one of the three disciplines stated above.

The word 'Mṛtyum' in this verse stands for mundane existence in the shape of repeated births and death. The use of the verb 'Taranti', with 'Ati' prefixed to it, is intended to show that those who worship as indicated above attain lasting union with the supreme eternal Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, and are never born again. In short, the words 'Mṛtyum Atitaranti' in this verse convey the same idea as has been brought out by the words 'he is not born again' in verse 23 and 'beholding the Self in the self in verse 24 above.

Mentioning thus the various means to God-realization, the Lord now describes in the next two verses the character of the Kṣetra, as promised in verse 3 above, by declaring it as subject to birth and death, and glorifies the knower of the real truth about the Self.

यावत्सञ्जायते किञ्चित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम्।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥ २६ ॥

भरतर्षभ O best among the Bharatas, Arjuna; यावत् किञ्चित् whatsoever; स्थावरजङ्गमम् immobile or mobile i.e., inanimate or animate; सत्वम् being; सञ्जायते is born; तत् that (all); क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात् (as emanated) from the union of the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña (Matter and Spirit); विद्धि know.

Arjuna, whatsoever being, animate or inanimate, is born, know it as emanated from the union of Kṣetra (Matter) and the Kṣetrajña (Spirit). (26)

The adjectives 'Yāvat' and 'Kiñcit' signify totality. Beings possessing locomotion, e.g., the celestials, human beings, beasts and birds etc., fall under the category of 'Jaṅgama'

(animate); while creatures devoid of locomotion, such as trees, creepers, rocks etc., are known as 'Sthāvara' (inanimate). Therefore, the substantive 'Sattvam' qualified by the three adjectives 'Yāvat'', 'Kiñcit' and 'Sthāvarajaṅgamam' covers the entire creation of animate and inanimate beings.

The term 'Kṣetra' denotes the aggregate of twentyfour categories enumerated in verse 5 of this chapter and which have been, referred to under the name of 'Aparā Prakṛti' or the lower Nature in VII.4 and 5. And the conscious principle which is the knower of this Kṣetra, and which has been spoken of as 'Parā' Prakṛti' (the higher Nature) in verse VII.5, is called 'Kṣetrajña.' Contact of this 'Kṣetrajña', i.e., of the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti, with the gross bodies evolved from Nature has been referred to in this verse as the union of Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña; and the emanation of beings in different shapes and forms through various types of wombs or species is what has been spoken of in this verse as their birth from such union.

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम्।
विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति॥ २७॥

यः who; विनश्यत्सु सर्वेषु भूतेषु in all evanescent beings (both animate and inanimate); परमेश्वरम् the supreme Lord; अविनश्यन्तम् imperishable; समम् तिष्ठन्तम् (and) equally abiding; पश्यति sees; सः he (alone); पश्यति (really) sees.

He alone truly sees, who sees the supreme Lord as imperishable and abiding equally in all perishable beings, both animate and inanimate. (27)

The substantive 'Bhūteṣu' qualified by the two adjectives 'Vinaśyatsu' and 'Sarveṣu', denotes all creatures undergoing repeated births and deaths, whose contact with, and dissociation from, the different subtle and gross bodies is held to be the cause of their birth and death. The use of the word 'Sarveṣu' is intended to cover the totality of beings; while the adjective 'Vinaśyatsu' has been used in order to show that they are all liable to perish by virtue of their identity with the body.

It should be remembered in this connection that it is the body which is liable to perish, and not the soul. The Self or Spirit is eternal and imperishable; and it is really the same in all living beings, who appear as different through difference of bodies. This is what is sought to be conveyed in the present verse.

The word 'Parameśvaram' in this verse stands for that immutable Spirit, existing entirely beyond Prakṛti, which has been declared in verse 22 above as the Witness, the Guide, the Sustainer, the Experiencer, the Overlord and the supreme Spirit, and shown to be one with the Kṣetrajña' or the knowing Self. This supreme Puruṣa though essentially an embodiment of absolute Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, and existing entirely beyond Prakṛti, is spoken of as the 'Kṣetrajña' and the experiencer of the Guṇas evolved from Prakṛti due to Its contact with Prakṛti. Seeing the one imperishable, immutable Spirit, the real self of all living beings, as eternally and equally abiding in their bodies, identity with which has earned for those beings the title of 'perishable', is what is meant by 'seeing the supreme Lord as imperishable and equally abiding in all living beings'.

The present verse speaks of the Self as one and immutable, i.e., free from all modifications such as birth and death etc. Therefore, he alone really sees, who sees this one eternal conscious Self as immutable, imperishable, equally abiding everywhere and unattached as shown above. The vision of those who view it as subject to birth and death, and as happy or otherwise, due to its identity with the body, is faulty; that is why, even though seeing, they do not see at all.

In the preceding verse it has been stated that he alone really sees who sees that supreme Lord as imperishable and equally abiding in all beings; justifying the above statement the Lord now declares attainment of the supreme state as the reward of such vision.

समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम्।
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम्॥ २८॥

हि because; सर्वत्र in all; समवस्थितम् equally seated; ईश्वरम् the (supreme) Lord; समम् (as) one; पश्यन् seeing; आत्मना by himself; आत्मानम् himself; न not; हिनस्ति (who) kills; ततः thereby; पराम् गतिम् the supreme state; याति (he) attains.

For, he who kills not himself by himself by seeing the supreme Lord, equally present in all, as one, thereby reaches the supreme state. (28)

The indeclinable 'Hi' in this verse, implies cause. The use of this particle is intended to show that since he who is endowed with an equal vision does not kill himself and reaches the supreme state, therefore, his vision alone is correct.

The one supreme Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, is equally present everywhere. It is due to ignorance that He appears different in different bodies; really, there is no difference in Him. Clearly apprehending and realizing the above truth is what is meant by 'seeing the supreme Lord, equally present everywhere, as one.' Those who have no knowledge of this truth lack equal vision; for, they distinguish one individual from another. They regard some as their beloved and well-wishers while they look upon others as disagreeable and unfriendly and cognize themselves as different from others, and finite in character. Therefore, inasmuch as they recognize the birth and death of physical bodies as their own birth and death, they undergo repeated births in different species and continue to die again and again. This is what is meant by their killing themselves by their self. He however, who sees the one Supreme Lord as equally present in all neither views himself as other than God nor feels that he has any connection with those physical bodies. Hence he does not see his own end in the death of the physical body; and that is why he does not kill himself by his own self. In short, he gets established in identity with the supreme eternal Spirit, who is all-knowing and imperishable and an embodiment of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss; that is why he secures lasting immunity from birth and death.

The 'Parā Gati' referred to in this verse is the same as has been spoken of elsewhere as the supreme state, attaining which one has no longer to return and which is the goal of all spiritual practices.

Describing thus the glory and reward of the seeing the eternal Spirit who is Consciousness and Bliss solidified as equally present everywhere, the Lord now glorifies, in the next verse, the man who sees that Spirit as a non-doer.

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः।
यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति॥ २९॥

च and; यः who; कर्माणि (all) actions; सर्वशः in all respects; प्रकृत्या एव by Prakṛti alone; क्रियमाणानि being done; तथा and; आत्मानम् the Self; अकर्तारम् a non-doer; पश्यति sees; सः he (alone); पश्यति (really) sees.

And he alone really sees, who sees all actions being performed in every way by Prakṛti alone, and the Self as the non-doer. (29)

Verse 27 and 28 of Chapter III and verse 19 of Chapter XIV speak of all actions being performed by the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti, and verses 8 and 9 of Chapter V speak of the senses acting on sense-objects; whereas the present verse indirectly exhorts us to see all actions being done by Prakṛti. These three statements, though apparently differing from one another, point to the same conclusion, as we shall see below.

The three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—are all evolutes of Prakṛti; and the senses, mind and intellect etc., as well as the objects of senses—all these are extensions of the Guṇas alone. Therefore, speaking of the senses as acting on sense-objects, of the Guṇas as acting on the Guṇas, and of all actions being performed by the Guṇas is the same as declaring all actions being done by Prakṛti. Thus the same thing has been stated in all the three places, there is hardly any difference in the three statements. They are all intended to show the non-doership of the Self.

The Self is eternal, pure, awakened, free and devoid of all modifications; it has no connection whatsoever with Prakṛti. That is why it is neither the doer of any action nor the experiencer of the fruit of actions. The direct perception of this truth is what is meant by seeing the Self as the non-doer. And the assertion that such realization is the only true realization is intended to glorify this vision. The intention is to show that the vision of those who view the Self as the doer of all actions and the experiencer of their fruit, due to its contact with the mind, intellect and body, is mistaken and therefore incorrect.

Thus glorifying the realization of the Self as the non-doer, the Lord now points out the reward of perceiving Its unity.

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति।
तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते तदा॥ ३०॥

यदा when; भूतपृथग्भावम् the diversified existence of beings; एकस्थम् (as) rooted in the one (supreme Spirit); च and; ततः एव from that alone; विस्तारम् the spreading forth (of all beings); अनुपश्यति (man) perceives; तदा that very moment; ब्रह्म the Supreme (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified); सम्पद्यते (he) attains.

The moment man perceives the diversified existence of beings as rooted in the one supreme Spirit, and the spreading forth of all beings from the same, that very moment he attains Brahma (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified). (30)

The compound word 'Bhūtapṛthagbhāvam' in this verse stands for the manifold variety of animate and inanimate beings who are said to emanate from the union of 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña' (XIII.26), and in whom the Sādhaka has been indirectly advised to see God as equally present (Ibid.,27). And just as a man who has just woken from a dream perceives the motley show of beings seen in his dreaming state in his own self and also recognizes that they were all projections of his being, that, in fact there was nothing in that dream-world other than himself, that he alone saw himself in divergent forms, even so the man of right vision sees all creatures as existing in God, and everything as emanating from Him.

The indeclinables 'Yadā' and 'Tadā' signify immediate sequence of time. The use of these two words is intended to show that the realization of Brahma or attainment of oneness with God follows immediately after the perception of the above truth, that the process involves no amount of delay. It is this attainment of oneness with Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, that is otherwise known as attainment of the supreme state, attainment of liberation, and realization of supreme peace and lasting Bliss.

On being told that the Self is equally present in all beings, changeless and inactive, one wonders how, even though dwelling in all bodies, the Self can remain untouched by their evils, and a non-doer. In order to remove this doubt, the Lord now describes in the following three verses the glory of the Self, as promised in verse 3 above.

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥ ३१ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kunti, Arjuna; **अनादित्वात्** being without beginning; **निर्गुणत्वात्** (and) being attributeless; **अयम्** this; **अव्ययः** indestructible; **परमात्मा** the supreme Spirit; **शरीरस्थः अपि** though dwelling in the body; **न करोति** does nothing (in fact); **न** nor; **लिप्यते** gets contaminated.

Arjuna, being without beginning and without attributes, this indestructible supreme Spirit, though dwelling in the body, in fact does nothing, nor gets contaminated. (31)

That which has no origin or cause, which is never born anew, and which has existed for ever, is called 'Anādi' or without beginning, and 'Nirguṇa' is that which lies entirely beyond Prakṛti and her Guṇas, and which has no real connection at any time, and under any circumstance whatsoever, with the Guṇas and their evolutes. The use of the two words 'Anāditvāt' and 'Nirguṇatvāt' therefore, shows that the subject of discussion, viz., the Self, is both without beginning, and without attributes; therefore, it is actionless, untainted and indestructible-wholly beyond the six forms of modifications such as birth, death and so on.

The demonstrative adjective 'Ayam'

points to that which has been discussed immediately before. The use of this adjective along with the word 'Paramātmā', therefore, shows that the supreme Spirit referred to in this verse is the same as has been spoken of as 'Parameśvara' (the supreme Lord) in verse 27 as 'Īśvara' (Lord) in verse 28, as the 'Atmā' (Self) in verse 29, and as 'Brahma' (the Supreme) in verse 30 above. In other words the use of 'Ayam' is intended to show that all these terms are identical in meaning.

It may be asked here: If all these terms refer to the same entity, why was it necessary to use different words for the same thing? Our submission in this connection is that in verse 3 above the Lord undertook to reveal to Arjuna the character and glory of the 'Kṣetrajña' (the knowing Self). Therefore, the Lord has deliberately used different words expressive of the divine principle in order to reveal the essential character of the Kṣetrajña, which is identical with the supreme eternal Spirit.

In reality, the Self has no connection whatsoever with the Guṇas of Prakṛti and their evolutes in the form of the intellect, mind, senses and the body; it exists entirely beyond the Guṇas. Just as ether, though present in the clouds, does not become their originator, nor is it affected by them, even so the Self is never the doer of actions nor does it get contaminated by the bodies. The Lord Himself elucidates this point in the next two verses with the help of illustrations.

In support of his statement that the Self, though residing in the body, does not get contaminated by it, the Lord further says:—

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते।
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते॥ ३२॥

यथा as; सर्वगतम् आकाशम् the all-pervading ether; सौक्ष्म्यात् by reason of its subtlety; न उपलिप्यते is not tainted; तथा so; देहे in the body; सर्वत्र every where; अवस्थितः seated; आत्मा the Self; न उपलिप्यते is not affected (by the attributes of the body owing to its attributeless character).

As the all-pervading ether is not tainted by reason of its subtlety, so seated everywhere in the body, the Self is not affected by the attributes of the body due to its attributeless character. (32)

By the analogy of ether, the verse proves the stainless character of the Self. The idea is that just as, though equally present in the air, fire, water and earth, ether is in no way contaminated by their good and evil qualities, even so though permeating the entire body, and because it is extremely subtle and exists entirely beyond the Guṇas, the Self is not affected in the least by the good and evil qualities of the intellect, mind, senses and the body.

The Lord now explains how the Self is not the doer, though dwelling in the body.

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत॥ ३३॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; यथा as; एकः रविः the one sun; इमम् this; कृत्स्नम् entire; लोकम् universe; प्रकाशयति lights; तथा so; क्षेत्री the (one) Ātmā or Self; कृत्स्नम् क्षेत्रम् the entire Kṣetra (Field); प्रकाशयति illumines.

Arjuna, as the one sun illumines this entire universe, so the one Ātmā (Spirit) illumines the whole Kṣetra (Field). (33)

The illustration of the sun has been used in this verse to demonstrate the non-doership of the Self, and the qualification 'Ekaḥ' to bring out its non-dual character. That is to say, just as the one sun lights up the entire universe, so does the one Self infuse life and activity into the whole world of matter referred to in verses 5 and 6 above under the name of 'Kṣetra' and its evolutes. And through different mental apparatuses the Self appears to manifest itself differently in different bodies. Nevertheless, like the sun, the Self neither performs the actions pertaining to the bodies nor does it cause them to be performed, nor is it tainted by evils like duality or partiality etc. That immortal Self ever remains pure, conscious actionless, immutable, unchanged, impartial and stainless under every circumstance.

Having thrown light on the six points raised in verse 3 above, the Lord now winds up the chapter, holding out God-realization as the reward of fully grasping the whole teaching contained therein.

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा।
भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम्॥ ३४॥

एवम् thus; क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः between the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña; अन्तरम् the difference; च and; भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षम् (the phenomenon of) liberation from Prakṛti with her evolutes; ये whosoever; ज्ञानचक्षुषा with the eye of wisdom; विदुः perceive; ते they; परम् the Supreme (Brahma or God); यान्ति attain.

Those who thus perceive with the eye of wisdom the difference between the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña, and the phenomenon of liberation from Prakṛti with her evolutes, reach the supreme eternal Spirit. (34)

The compound word 'Jñānacakṣuṣā' in this verse refers to that realization of Truth which in the opinion of the Lord as given in verse 2 above constitutes true Knowledge, nay, which has been declared in V.16 as the means of dispelling ignorance, and which is attained by such means as 'Amānitva' (absence of pride) etc.

By means of such wisdom one is able to realize that the cosmic body consisting of the twentyfour categories, beginning with the five subtle elements, enumerated in verse 5, is known by the name of 'Kṣetra', that it is knowable, subject to change, perishable, mutable, material and transient; whereas the 'Kṣetrajña' (the Soul) is its knower, conscious, changeless, actionless, eternal, imperishable, unattached, pure, of the same stuff as Knowledge, and one; that the two being wholly diverse in character, the Kṣetrajña is entirely different from the 'Kṣetra'; that the apparent identity of the two is rooted in ignorance; that, in reality, the 'Kṣetrajña' has no connection whatsoever

with the 'Kṣetra'. This is what is meant by perceiving with the eye of wisdom the difference between the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña'.

Of the three components of the compound word 'Bhūtaprakṛtimokṣam', 'Bhūta' stands for the entire realm of objective reality, which is an evolute of Prakṛti; whereas 'Prakṛti' represents the seed of this creation. Therefore, 'Bhūtaprakṛtimokṣa' means complete liberation from Prakṛti and her evolutes. And while realizing in the aforesaid manner the difference between the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña, when the soul gets disunited from 'Prakṛti' and established in identity with its real self, the supreme Spirit, one is said to have known liberation from Prakṛti with her evolutes.

The dreaming man, on being reminded anyhow of his waking state, comes to know that he was dreaming, therefore, he wakes up the moment it strikes him that waking in his real body is the only means of escape from the woes of the dream state. Even so the Jñānayogī or the Sādhaka following the path of Knowledge, while perceiving the difference between the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña, comes to realize at the same time that his apparent connection with the Kṣetra was due to his having erroneously taken it to be real, therefore, riddance from such connection consists in getting established in identity with one's real or divine self, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. Such a man is said to have come to know his liberation from Prakṛti with her evolutes.

The moment this truth is realized the entire realm of objective reality disappears along with ignorance, and God-realization takes place immediately.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगो नाम
त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः॥ १३॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the thirteenth chapter entitled "The Yoga of Discrimination between the Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña".

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter XIV

The present chapter discusses matters relating to the three Guṇas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—via., their essential character, evolutes, cause and power, how and under what circumstances they throw the embodied soul into bondage, as well as the nature of that bondage, and, finally, the marks of the soul who has risen above the Guṇas and realized God. In order to inculcate the advisability, in the first instance, viz., during the period of one's Sādhanā or spiritual discipline, of shaking off Rajas and Tamas and adopting Sattva, and finally of giving up all connection with the Guṇas, the three Guṇas have been separately dealt with. Hence this chapter has been given the title of 'The Yoga of Division of the three Guṇas."

Title of the Chapter

In verses 1 and 2 of this chapter the Lord glorifies Wisdom, the discussion of which follows later, and introduces the subject. Detailing in the third and fourth the process of evolution of all beings from the union of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, in the fifth the Lord declares the three Guṇas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—as the cause of bondage of the embodied soul. Verses 6 to 8 discuss in their order of sequence the nature of the three Guṇas and the way in which they bind the Jīvātmā. Mentioning in the ninth which Guṇa drives the soul to what, and showing in the tenth how one Guṇa prevails over the other two, the Lord discusses in verses 11 to 13 the marks indicating the preponderance of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas respectively. Discussing in the fourteenth and the fifteenth the fate of the man who dies during the preponderance of each of the three Guṇas, the Lord details in the sixteenth the corresponding fruits of actions of the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika Types. Declaring in the seventeenth that the quality of Sattva gives rise to knowledge, the quality of Rajas begets greed and the quality of Tamas breeds error, stupor and ignorance, the Lord details in the eighteenth the corresponding fate of the Jīvātmā established in each of the three Guṇas. Verses 19 to 20 proclaim the reward of viewing actions as being performed by the Guṇas, and the Ātmā as standing beyond the Guṇas and a non-doer, as well as of transcending the three Guṇas. In verse 21, Arjuna inquires of the Lord about the marks and conduct of one who has risen above the Guṇas, and about the means of rising above them. In response to this, the Lord discusses in verses 22 to 25 the marks and conduct of the man who has risen above the three Guṇas, and points out in the twentysixth the means as well as the reward of rising above them. The Lord then concludes the chapter by declaring Himself in the last or twentyseventh verse as the foundation of Brahma, immortality, and so on inasmuch as they are all identical with Him.

Summary of the Chapter

Link of the Discourse

In the course of Chapter XIII, the Lord first of all defined 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' and declared their knowledge alone as true Knowledge, and accordingly discussed the denotation, character, and evolutes of the 'Kṣetra' and the order of evolution of its constituents and the essential character and glory of the 'Kṣetrajña' Introducing the topic of the Guṇas under the name of Prakṛti and Puruṣa in verse 19, the Lord declared the three evolutes of Prakṛti, and added in the twentyfirst that attachment to the three Guṇas alone was responsible for one's repeated birth in good and evil wombs. In this connection one is naturally tempted to know the diverse characteristics of the three Guṇas, how they bind the Jīvātmā to the body, the type of birth one attains through attachment to a particular Guṇa, the means of ridding oneself of the three Guṇas, and the marks and conduct of the soul who has been rid of them. Chapter XIV has, therefore, been introduced to elucidate all these points. The same Jñāna or Wisdom that has been dealt with in Chapter XIII has to be clearly brought out and elaborately discussed in this chapter; therefore, glorifying that Wisdom in two verses, the Lord first of all undertakes to resume its discussion.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम्।
यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः॥ १॥

ज्ञानानाम् of wisdoms; उत्तमम् the best; परम् supreme; ज्ञानम् wisdom; भूयः again; प्रवक्ष्यामि I shall discuss; यत् which; ज्ञात्वा knowing, acquiring; सर्वे all; मुनयः sages; इतः (liberated) from this (mundane existence); पराम् highest; सिद्धिम् perfection; गताः have attained.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I shall discuss once more the supreme wisdom, the best of all wisdoms, acquiring which all sages have attained highest perfection, being liberated from this mundane existence. (1)

The word 'Jñānānām' in this verse covers the entire body of teachings, varied in character, contained in the Vedas, Smṛti texts, Purāṇas and other sacred literature, and intended to throw light on different subjects. Of these, the Lord undertakes in this verse to discuss that true wisdom which, while differentiating between Prakṛti and Puruṣa, reveals the true character of Puruṣa. This wisdom brings direct realization of God and, freeing the embodied soul from the bondage of Prakṛti liberates it for ever; hence it has been declared as the best and highest of all wisdom.

The use of the indeclinable 'Bhūyaḥ' is intended to show that this wisdom has been discussed even before; but being most profound and abstruse, it is difficult to understand. Hence it is taken up for discussion again in order that it may be fully understood. The method of exposition, of course, is different this time.

The word 'Munayaḥ' stands for those wise men who have attained the supreme state through the practice of Jñānayoga or the discipline of Knowledge; and the highest perfection reached by these wise men is the same which is spoken of as 'the attainment of supreme Brahma', and which has been variously described as 'supreme Peace', 'everlasting happiness' and the 'state from which there is no return' etc.

The word 'Itaḥ' (hence) signifies mortal existence. The use of this word shows that the sages referred to in this verse have ceased for all time to maintain any connection with this woeful world consisting of death.

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः।
सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च॥ २॥

इदम् this; ज्ञानम् wisdom; उपाश्रित्य taking recourse to or practising; मम My; साधर्म्यम् Being; आगताः (persons who have) entered into; सर्गे at the cosmic dawn; न उपजायन्ते are not born again; च and; प्रलये during the cosmic night or final dissolution; अपि even; न nor; व्यथन्ति feel disturbed.

Those who, by practising this wisdom, have entered into My Being are not born again at the cosmic dawn nor feel disturbed even during the cosmic night. (2)

The demonstrative adjective 'Idam' has been used before 'Jñānam' in order to make it clear that whatever has been stated in this verse is in praise of that very wisdom which has already been discussed in Chapter XIII, and is going to be discussed in the present Chapter as well. And those who, having realized in the light of the wisdom referred to in this context the true nature of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, have reached entirely beyond Prakṛti and her Guṇas, and remain established in identity with the absolute, formless supreme Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, are said to have taken recourse to or practised this wisdom.

The words 'Mama sādharmyamāgatāḥ' in the present verse convey the same idea as has been expressed by 'Parām Siddhim Gatāḥ' (attained highest perfection) in the preceding one. That is to say, realizing the attributeless aspect of God as one's own self is what is meant by attaining His Being.

The latter half of this verse is intended to convey that those who, taking recourse to and practising the wisdom taught in this chapter, have realized the supreme eternal Spirit as their very self, cease to have any connection with the creation or dissolution of the universe. For the principal factor determining one's birth in good or evil wombs in contact with the Guṇas, and liberated souls stand entirely beyond the Guṇas; hence there is no return for them. And when there is no birth, the question of death does not arise at all.

Thus undertaking to teach that wisdom again, and glorifying it, the Lord now introduces the subject by declaring in two verses how the entire world emanates from Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम्।
सम्भवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत॥ ३॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; मम My; महत् ब्रह्म primordial Nature known as the great Brahma; योनिः (is) the womb (of all creatures); अहम् (and) I; तस्मिन् in that (womb); गर्भम् the seed (of all life); दधामि place; ततः from that (union of Matter and Spirit); सर्वभूतानाम् of all beings; सम्भवः the birth; भवति comes to be.

My primordial Nature, known as the great Brahma, is the womb of all creatures; in that womb I place the seed of all life. The creation of all beings follows from that union of Matter and Spirit, O Arjuna. (3)

The Substantive 'Brahma', qualified by the adjective 'Mahat', stands for primordial Nature, which is the cause of entire creation and is also termed as 'Avyakta' (the Unmanifest) and 'Pradhāna' (the primary cause). The idea has already been explained in the commentary on IX.7. By calling it 'Mama' (Mine), the Lord shows that this Prakṛti has been connected with Him from time without beginning. The material or efficient cause and the womb of a mother are called 'Yoni'. By giving this name to Prakṛti the Lord shows that she is the material cause as well as the womb of the various bodies of all living beings.

The word 'Garbham' in this verse stands for the totality of conscious selves or egos referred to in Chapter VII as 'Parā Prakṛti' or the higher Nature. And linking the egos that had been lying merged in God alongwith their Saṁskāras or latencies during the cosmic night, with Prakṛti at the cosmic dawn is what is meant by placing the seed of all life in the womb known as Prakṛti.

The demonstrative adverb 'Tataḥ' (thence) refers to the union of Matter and Spirit brought about in this way by God; while 'Sarvabhūtānām' stands for the totality of living beings appearing in various forms, e.g., celestials, human beings, beasts, birds and so on according to the latencies of their past deeds. 'Sambhavaḥ' signifies the appearance of these creatures in various subtle or astral forms through this conjunction of Matter and Spirit. The first offspring of this union, appearing at the dawn of creation, is Hiraṇyagarbha (the astral form of Brahmā, the Creator) and the subtle bodies of other creatures follow next.

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः सम्भवन्ति याः।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता॥ ४॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; **सर्वयोनिषु** all the species (of various kinds); **याः** as many; **मूर्तयः** embodied beings; **सम्भवन्ति** appear; **महत् ब्रह्म** the great Brahma or Prakṛti; **तासाम्** their; **योनिः** (is) the conceiving mother; **अहम्** (and) I (am); **बीजप्रदः पिता** the seed-giving father.

Of all embodied beings that appear in all the species of various kinds, Arjuna, Prakṛti, or Nature is the conceiving Mother, while I am the seed-giving Father. (4)

The word 'Mūrtayaḥ' stands for the totality of living beings clothed in various bodies of different shapes and colours and belonging to different species, such as celestials, human beings, Rākṣasas or demons, beasts, birds and so on; and 'Sambhavanti' denotes their incarnation in the aforesaid species.

By the latter half of this verse the Lord conveys that the subtle and gross froms of these beings are all constituted of Matter, while the conscious spirit dwelling in them is a particle of God. It is the union of Prakṛti and God that brings forth all embodied beings; hence Prakṛti is their Mother and God, their Father.

In verse 21 of Chapter XIII it was stated that attachment to the Guṇas is responsible for the birth of the embodied soul in good or evil wombs. Following this line of thought, the Lord spoke in verses 3 and 4 above of embodied souls being born in species of various kinds; but the verses contain no reference to the Guṇas. Therefore, while introducing this topic in order to make it clear what these Guṇas are, what is meant by getting attached to them, attachment to what particular Guṇa causes good birth or

otherwise and so on, the Lord in course of the next four verses first of all declares that the Guṇas are evolved from Prakṛti then mentions them separately by name and lastly discusses their nature as well as the way in which they bind the Jīva.

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम्॥ ५॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed one, Arjuna; सत्त्वम् the quality of Sattva (harmony); रजः the quality of Rajas (motion); तमः (and) the quality of Tamas (inertia); इति these; प्रकृतिसम्भवाः born of Nature; गुणाः (three) qualities; अव्ययम् देहिनम् the imperishable Soul; देहे to the body; निबध्नन्ति tie down.

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—these three qualities born of Nature tie down the imperishable soul to the body, Arjuna. (5)

The use of the words 'Sattvam', 'Rajas' and 'Tamas' is intended to point out the diversity, the names and the number of the Guṇas. That is to say, Guṇas are three in number, they are known by the names of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and they are diverse in character. They are called 'Prakṛti-Sambhava' (born of Nature) in order to show that they are all evolutes of Prakṛti, and that the whole material creation is an amplification of these three Guṇas.

The word 'Dehinam' is intended to convey that the Guṇas react only on those who look upon the body as their self; while the use of the adjective 'Avyayam' with reference to the same shows that in reality the soul as such is immutable, hence there can be no bondage for it. It regards itself as bound only due to ignorance that has haunted it from time without beginning. These three Guṇas induce in the soul a sense of possession, attachment and a feeling of identification in respect of enjoyments and bodies corresponding to themselves; this is what is meant by their tying the soul to the body. In other words, what binds the soul is its feeling of identification, attachment and sense of possession in respect of bodies evolved from the three Guṇas, and of objects connected there—with.

The Lord now depicts the essential character of Sattva, and the way in which it binds the soul.

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम्।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ॥ ६॥

अनघ O sinless one, Arjuna; तत्र of these Guṇas; सत्त्वम् the quality of Sattva (harmony); निर्मलत्वात् because of its being immaculate; प्रकाशकम् (is) illuminating; अनामयम् (and) flawless; सुखसङ्गेन through attachment (*i.e.,* identification) with joy; च and; ज्ञानसङ्गेन through attachment (*i.e.,* identification) with wisdom; बध्नाति it binds.

Of these Sattva, being immaculate, is illuminating and flawless, Arjuna; it binds through identification with joy and wisdom. (6)

The quality of Sattva is absolutely pure in character and untainted by any form of evil; hence it is illuminating and free from morbidity of any kind. It lends

illumination to the mind and the senses, and uprooting sorrow, distraction, depravities, evil propensities and vices, brings peace. When the quality of Sattva is in the ascendant, the restlessness of the mind automatically disappears, and feeling disgusted with and losing all interest in the world, man gets absorbed in the thought of the supreme Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. Besides this, his mind and all his senses are rid of sorrow and lethargy, and become more animated. It is these characteristics of Sattva that are indicated by the word 'Nirmalatvāt' and the word 'Sattvam' has been qualified by the adjectives 'Prakāśakam' and 'Anāmayam' in order to bring out the essential character of Sattva.

The word 'Sukha', forming part of the compound word 'Sukhasaṅgena' in this verse, denotes the Sāttvika form of joy defined in verses 36 and 37 of Chapter XVIII. During the experience of this joy the feeling of identification that the soul comes to develop with it arrests the progress of the soul on the path of spiritual evolution and debars it from the attainment of liberation in the current life. This is what is meant by the quality of Sattva binding the soul through identification with joy.

'Jñāna' means the faculty of knowledge. On the unfoldment of this faculty the feeling of identification that the soul comes to develop with it debars it from attaining the state which lies beyond the three Guṇas. This is what is meant by the Sattvaguṇa binding the soul through identification with wisdom.

By addressing Arjuna as 'Anagha' (sinless one), the Lord shows that being sinless by nature, Arjuna had no fear of bondage.

The Lord now proceeds to discuss the essential character of Rajas and shows how it binds the soul.

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम्।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम्॥७॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; **रागात्मकम्** of the nature of passion; **रजः** the quality of Rajas; **तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम्** (as) born of cupidity and attachment; **विद्धि** know; **तत्** it; **देहिनम्** (this) soul; **कर्मसङ्गेन** through attachment to actions (and their fruit); **निबध्नाति** binds.

Arjuna, know the quality of Rajas, which is of the nature of passion, as born of cupidity and attachment. It binds the soul through attachment, to actions and their fruit. (7)

The quality of Rajas manifests itself in the form of passion or attachment. Rāga or passion is its gross manifestation hence the quality of Rajas has been characterized as being of the nature of passion.

Here it may be urged that desire itself has been declared elsewhere as an offspring of Rajoguṇa (vide III.37 and XIV.12). How, then, are we to understand that Rajoguṇa is begotten of 'cupidity' and 'attachment' ? In this connection it may be submitted that the quality of Rajas develops through cupidity and attachment, while cupidity and attachment in their turn are developed through Rajoguṇa. They are interdependent like the seed and the tree. Of these, Rajas is analogous to the seed; while cupidity, attachment etc., correspond to the tree. The seed is a product of the tree, and yet it is the cause of the tree as well. It is in order to make this point

clear that at some places Rajoguṇa has been declared to be the cause of desire etc., while at other places desire etc., have been declared to be the cause of Rajoguṇa. The compound word 'Tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam' in this very verse can be interpreted in both ways. If it is interpreted to mean that which is born of Tṛṣṇā (desire) and Saṅga (attachment)— तृष्णासङ्गाभ्यां समुद्भवति— Rajoguṇa turns out to be an effect of the latter. If, on the other hand, it is taken to mean that from which Tṛṣṇā (desire) and Saṅga (attachment) emanate— तृष्णासङ्गयोः समुद्भवौ यस्मात्—Rajoguṇa turns out to be the cause. On the analogy of the seed and the tree, both these conclusions are true, hence 'Tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam' can be interpreted both ways.

'Karmasaṅga' means establishing one's connection with actions and their fruit by claiming to be their doer, and expecting a particular fruit from them. Through this connection with actions and their fruit Rajoguṇa keeps the soul tied down to this mundane existence consisting of birth and death. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by the latter half of this verse.

The Lord now describes the character of Tamoguṇa and the way in which it binds the soul.

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम्।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत॥ ८ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; सर्वदेहिनाम् of all those who look upon the body as their own self; मोहनम् the deluder; तमः the quality of Tamas (inertia); तु however; अज्ञानजम् (as) born of ignorance; विद्धि know; तत् it; प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिः through error, sloth and sleep; निबध्नाति binds (the soul).

And know, Tamas, the deluder of all those who look upon the body as their own self, as born of ignorance. It binds the soul through error, sloth and sleep, Arjuna. (8)

The quality of Tamas (inertia) stupefies the mind and senses, depriving them of their cognitive faculty. This is what is meant by the Lord when He speaks of Tamoguṇa as deluding those who regard the body as their self. All those living beings who have connection with the mind and senses and identify themselves with the body or claim it as their own regard their own self as benumbed when their mind and senses get benumbed during sleep. Those liberated souls, however, who have ceased to regard the mind, senses and body as their own self no longer recognize any connection with them; hence the Lord speaks of Tamoguṇa as the deluder of 'all those who look upon the body as their own self'.

Here it may be urged that verse 17 of this very chapter speaks of ignorance as a product of Tamoguṇa. How, then, are we to understand that Tamoguṇa has its root in ignorance ? In this connection it may be submitted that ignorance grows through Tamoguṇa and Tamoguṇa in its turn grows through ignorance. Like the seed and the tree they too are interdependent: ignorance is analogous to the seed, while Tamoguṇa corresponds to the tree. Therefore, at some places Tamoguṇa is stated to be the cause, while at others it is declared to be a product of ignorance.

Fruitless activity of the mind and senses and neglect of duties enjoined by the Śāstras or sacred books is called

'Pramāda' (error). Ālasya is inactivity or disinclination to perform one's duty. And drowsiness, the state of dream and deep sleep—all these are covered by 'Nidrā'. Restraining the soul through all these from practices leading to liberation, Tamoguṇa keeps it tied down to mundane existence consisting of birth and death. This is what is meant by binding the soul through error, sloth and sleep.

Delineating thus the character of the three Guṇas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—and showing how they bind the soul, the Lord now describes the natural function of the three Guṇas.

सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत॥ ९॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; सत्त्वम् the quality of Sattva; सुखे to joy; सञ्जयति drives; रजः (and) the quality of Rajas; कर्मणि to action; तमः (while) the quality of Tamas; तु on the other hand; ज्ञानम् wisdom; आवृत्य obscuring; प्रमादे to error; उत as well as (sleep and sloth); सञ्जयति incites.

Sattva drives one to joy, and Rajas to action; while Tamas, clouding wisdom, incites one to error as well as sleep and sloth. (9)

'Sukha' here denotes the Sāttvika type of joy (XVIII.36,37). Weaning man from worldly enjoyments and activities, as well as from error, sloth and sleep, Sattvaguṇa induces Sāttvika joy through contemplation on the Self etc. This is what is meant when the Lord speaks of Sattvaguṇa as driving one to joy.

'Karma' stands for action with an interested motive enjoined by the Śāstras (and bearing fruit in the form of enjoyments of this world and the next). Awakening the desire for enjoyments of various kinds, Rajoguṇa stirs man to activity with a view to obtaining those enjoyments. This is what the Lord means when He speaks of Rajoguṇa as rousing man to action.

When Tamoguṇa preponderates, it sometimes robs man of his faculty of judgment, which determines what is right and what is wrong; while at others it induces sleep by dulling his mind and senses. This is what is seeks to convey when the verse speaks of Tamoguṇa as darkening one's wisdom. And inducing delinquency and prompting man to idle pursuits—this is what is meant by inciting him to error.

The particle 'Tu' in this verse is intended to show that Tamoguṇa does not rest contented with merely obscuring man's wisdom, but does something else too; while 'Uta' shows that just as obscuring man's wisdom it incites him to error, even so it induces sleep and sloth. That is to say, when it clouds man's judgment, it incites him to error; and when it dulls and benumbs his consciousness in the shape of alertness of his mind and senses, it induces lethargy and sleep.

The next verse shows the way in which these Guṇas operate when they actually react on the Jīva.

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत।
रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा॥ १०॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; रजः the quality of Rajas; च and; तमः the quality of Tamas; अभिभूय overpowering; सत्त्वम् the quality of Sattva; भवति prevails; सत्त्वम् (overpowering) the quality of Sattva; च and; तमः the quality of Tamas; रजः the quality of Rajas (prevails); तथा एव even so; सत्त्वम् (overpowering) the quality of Sattva; रजः (and) the quality of Rajas; तमः the quality of Tamas (prevails).

Overpowering Rajas and Tamas, Arjuna, Sattva prevails; overpowering Sattva and Tamas, Rajas prevails even so, overpowering Sattva and Rajas, Tamas prevails.* **(10)**

When the quality of Sattva begins to function, thwarting the operation of Rajas and Tamas, the body, senses and mind, being flooded with illumination, discrimination and dispassion, enter into a state of extreme tranquillity and happiness. Hence during that time the effects of Rajoguṇa viz., greed, activity and the craving for enjoyment etc., and those of Tamoguṇa, viz., sleep, sloth and error etc., cannot appear. In this way, overpowering Rajas, and Tamas, the quality of Sattva gives rise to knowledge, illumination and happiness etc. This is what is meant by the preponderance of Sattva over Rajas and Tamas.

Even so, when the quality of Rajas begins to function, suspending the operation of Sattva and Tamas, the body, senses and mind are seized with a spell of restlessness, unrest, greed, the craving for enjoyment and an irresistible urge to undertake activities of various kinds. Hence the effects of Sattvaguṇa, viz., illumination, discrimination and tranquillity etc., almost disappear. The effects of Tamoguṇa, viz., sleep and sloth etc., also get suppressed. This is what is meant by the quality of Rajas preponderating over Sattva and Tamas.

Similarly, when the quality of Tamas begins to function, foiling the operation of Sattva and Rajas, dullness etc., prevail in the body, senses and mind; one feels inclined to lapse into error and the faculty of judgment gets blurred. Hence the effects of Sattva, viz., illumination and knowledge, and those of Rajas, viz., the propensity to work and the craving for enjoyment etc., almost vanish; they are no longer able to manifest themselves. This is what is meant by the quality of Tamas prevailing over Sattva and Rajas.

The preceding verse thus showed how each of the three Guṇas prevails over the other two. Here one would naturally feel inclined to know the marks of the preponderance of each Guṇa; therefore, the Lord, first of all, discusses the marks of the predominance of Sattvaguṇa.

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते।
ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत॥ ११॥

* Śrīmad Bhāgavata mentions the following ten factors as conducive to the growth of the Guṇas:—

आगमोऽपः प्रजा देशः कालः कर्म च जन्म च।
ध्यानं मन्त्रोऽथ संस्कारो दशैते गुणहेतवः॥

(XI.xiii.10)

"The sacred lore, water, progeny, place, time, occupation, birth, thought, mystic formulas and purificatory rites—these ten factors are conducive to the Guṇas, i.e., to their growth." That is to say, these factors promote that very Guṇa with which they are associated.

यदा when; अस्मिन् देहे in this body; सर्वद्वारेषु (as well as) in the mind and senses; प्रकाशः light; ज्ञानम् (and) discernment; उपजायते dawns; तदा then; इति thus; विद्यात् one should know; उत that; सत्त्वम् the quality of Sattva; विवृद्धम् (is) predominant.

When light and discernment dawn in this body, as well as in the mind and senses, then one should know that Sattva is predominant. (11)

When the quality of Sattva is predominant; man should scrupulously endeavour to devote his mind to the practices of meditation and adoration etc. Then alone can the flow of Sattvaguṇa endure for a considerable time. If, on the other hand, he neglects the opportunity, Tamoguṇa or Rajoguṇa may soon overpower it and start functioning itself.

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Asmin' with 'Dehe' is intended to bring out the importance of human birth. The intention is to show that an opportunity for the growth of Sattvaguṇa can be had in the human body alone, and it is in this birth alone that man can attain liberation with the help of that Guṇa. Creatures born in other species do not enjoy this privilege.

Height of animation and the feeling of lightness in the body and the growth of perspicuity and keenness in the mind and senses—this is what is meant by the dawn of light. And the dawn of wisdom or discernment consists in the awakening of the faculty of judgment distinguishing between truth and falsehood, right and wrong. When light and wisdom both make their appearance, the mind automatically recoils from the world and is flooded as it were with quietude, joy and tranquillity, and the feelings of attraction and aversion, sorrow and grief, anxiety, fear, fidgetiness, sleep, sloth and error etc., almost disappear.

Describing thus the marks indicating the growth of Sattvaguṇa, the Lord now discusses the marks which betoken the growth of Rajoguṇa.

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा।
रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ॥ १२॥

भरतर्षभ O chief of Bharatas, Arjuna; रजसि विवृद्धे with the preponderance of Rajoguṇa; लोभः greed; प्रवृत्तिः activity; कर्मणाम् आरम्भः undertaking of actions with an interested motive; अशमः restlessness; स्पृहा (and) a thirst for enjoyment; एतानि all these; जायन्ते appear.

With the preponderance of Rajas, Arjuna, greed, activity, undertaking of actions with an interested motive, restlessness and a thirst for enjoyment make their appearance. (12)

Greed is lust for wealth, prompted by which man is ever busy devising means of multiplying his possessions, refuses to part with them even when there is a suitable occasion for doing so and, while engaged in amassing wealth, seeks even to usurp the rights of others, minding not what is right and what is wrong. The urge or inclination, felt in the mind, to undertake various forms of activities is called 'Pravṛtti'; and 'Spṛhā' consists in recognizing any mundane object as indispensable for oneself. With the preponderance of Rajoguṇa, when the effects of Sattvaguṇa, viz., perspicuity, discrimination and tranquillity etc., and those of Tamoguṇa, viz., sleep, sloth and so on, get neutralized,

man begins to feel the need for various forms of enjoyment. His mind is swayed by greed and obsessed with a strong desire for accumulation of wealth, he begins to feel the urge for various forms of activities, his mind becomes restless, and he takes to various activities in response to that urge. This is what happens during the preponderance of Rajoguṇa.

The use of he vocative 'Bharatarṣabha' for Arjuna is intended to convey that being the chief of Bharatas, Arjuna was free from evils like greed etc., which are products of Rajoguṇa.

Describing thus the marks which indicate the preponderance of Rajoguṇa, the Lord now discusses the marks of the growth of Tamoguṇa.

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च।
तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन॥ १३॥

कुरुनन्दन O delighter of Kurus, Arjuna; **तमसि विवृद्धे** with the growth of Tamoguṇa; **अप्रकाशः** obtuseness, of mind and senses; **अप्रवृत्तिः** disinclination to perform one's obligatory duties; **च** and; **प्रमादः** frivolity; **च** and; **मोहः** the torpid state of mind; **एतानि** (all) these; **एव** indeed; **जायन्ते** appear.

With the growth of Tamas, Arjuna, obtuseness of the mind and senses, disinclination to perform one's obligatory duties, frivolity and stupor—all these appear. (13)

Perspicuity of the mind and senses is called 'Prakāśa' and the reverse of it, viz., obtuseness of the mind and senses, is called 'Aprakāśa'. This should be taken to include lack of the other marks of Sattvaguṇa. 'Apravṛtti' is the antithesis of Pravṛtti, referred to in the preceding verse as an effect of Rajoguṇa. Thus it means want of inclination to perform one's obligatory duties. Absence of the other marks of Rajoguṇa should also be taken as included in it. 'Pramāda' means neglect of duties enjoined by the Śāsrtas and addiction to idle pursuits. The torpid state of mind, which obscures one's judgment, and the state of sleep are covered by 'Moha'. When Tamoguṇa preponderates, the mind and senses become blank, man finds no relish in activity of any kind; he feels inclined to remain idle and do nothing. He neglects his duties and indulges in frivolous pursuits; his mind gets stupefied, his memory fails him. He is overtaken by drowsiness or sleep or lapses into a dream; his judgment takes leave of him and his faculty of understanding is also lost. All these marks appear when Tamoguṇa is in the ascendant. Hence when any of these marks appears in man, he should know that Tamoguṇa has the upper hand in him.

Describing thus the respective marks which indicate the growth of the three Guṇas, the Lord now points out in the following two verses the destiny which awaits a man who dies during the preponderance of a particular Guṇa.

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत्।
तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते॥ १४॥

यदा when; **देहभृत्** (this) man; **सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे** during the preponderance of Sattvaguṇa; **प्रलयम्**

(his) death; याति meets; तदा then; तु indeed; उत्तमविदाम् attained by men of noble deeds; अमलान् लोकान् the stainless ethereal worlds (such as heaven etc.); प्रतिपद्यते he obtains.

When a man dies during the preponderance of Sattva, he obtains the stainless ethereal worlds (heaven, etc.) attained by men of noble deeds. (14)

The use of the adverbs 'Yadā' and 'Tadā' is intended to convey that the verse describes the destiny of those who, though naturally established in any other Guṇas, give up the ghost during the preponderance of Sattvaguṇa. When the soul of such a man alongwith his mind, senses and vital airs leaves his physical body at a time when the quality of Sattva is predominant in him due to the impelling force of some past Karma or any other cause, that is to say, when 'light' and 'wisdom' prevail in his body, senses and mind as described in verse 11 above, he is said to have died during the preponderance of Sattvaguṇa.

The word 'Dehabhṛt' signifies that destinies of various kinds in the form of rebirth await only those who are embodied, i.e., who look upon the body as their own self or claim it as their own. Those liberated souls who do not thus regard the body as their self are never born again.

The use of the adjective 'Amalān' with the substantive 'Lokān' shows that the worlds attained by those who give up the ghost during the preponderance of Sattvaguṇa are free from impurities, i.e., evils, and afflictions of all kinds; they are full of ethereal light, pure and Sāttvika in essence. The word 'Uttama', forming part of the compound word 'Uttamavidām', stands for actions and worship enjoined by the Śāstras or sacred books; and 'Uttamavidām' refers to those who know the secret of such actions and worship, i.e., perform them in a disinterested spirit. Due to association with Sattvaguṇa, he who dies during the preponderance of that quality migrates to those very regions that are attained by such men through their disinterested action and worship.

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते।
तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते॥ १५॥

रजसि during the preponderance of Rajas; प्रलयम् death; गत्वा meeting; कर्मसङ्गिषु among those attached to action; जायते he is born; तथा (even) so; तमसि during the preponderance of Tamas; प्रलीनः dead; मूढयोनिषु in the species of stupid creatures (such as insects, beasts etc.); जायते is reborn.

Dying when Rajas predominates, he is born among those attached to action; even so the man who has expired during the preponderance of Tamas is reborn in the species of stupid creatures, such as insects, and beasts etc. (15)

When the soul of a man, alongwith his mind, senses and vital airs, casts off the physical body at a time when Rājasika feelings, such as greed, activity etc., mentioned in verse 12 above, are predominant, he is said to have died during the preponderance of Rajoguṇa. Karmasaṅgiṣu' refers to men who are attached to actions and their fruit; therefore, birth among those who are attached to action means birth as a human being.

In the same way a man is said to have died during the predominance of Tamoguṇa when his soul, including his mind, senses

and vital airs, abandons his physical body at a time when Tāmasika propensities like frivolity etc., mentioned in verse 13 above preponderate; and birth among Tāmasika creatures such as moths and insects, beasts and birds, trees and creepers, etc., is what is meant by being born in the wombs of stupid creatures.

It has been pointed out above how death during the ascendancy of the three Guṇas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—yields different results. Hearing this, one is naturally tempted to know why one Guṇa should predominate now, and another at another time. In order to satisfy this curiosity the Lord says:—

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम्।
रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम्॥ १६॥

सुकृतस्य कर्मणः of a noble deed; तु indeed; सात्त्विकम् Sāttvika or characterized by the quality of Sattva—such as joy, wisdom and dispassion etc.; निर्मलम् stainless; फलम् reward; आहुः they declare; रजसः of the Rājasika type (of actions); फलम् fruit; दुःखम् suffering; तमसः (and) of the Tāmasika type (of actions); फलम् result; अज्ञानम् (is stated to be) ignorance.

The reward of a righteous act, they say, is Sāttvika and faultless (in the shape of joy, wisdom and dispassion etc.); sorrow is declared to be the fruit of a Rājasika act and ignorance, the fruit of a Tāmasika act. (16)

The substantive 'Karmaṇaḥ' qualified by the adjective 'Sukṛtasya', in this verse stands for those Sāttvika actions that are enjoined by the Śāstras or sacred books and performed in a disinterested spirit. The Sāttvika and faultless fruit of such actions is no other than the pure impulses of wisdom and dispassion frequently arising in the mind due to the impelling force of those actions, and the attainment, after death, of worlds full of ethereal light and free from all forms of sorrow and evil, referred to in verse 14.

Rājasika actions are those which are performed with a view to obtain enjoyments, are prompted by egotism and involve much exertion (XVIII.24). They entail suffering in the form of exertion, not only during their performance, but continue to cause affliction even afterwards.

The tendencies formed as a result of these actions repeatedly awaken in the mind the Rājasika impulses of enjoyment, desire, greed and activity etc., which distract the mind and make it restless and miserable. Even enjoyments that are obtained as a result of these actions though appearing as delightful through ignorance, are really full of woe. And the whirlpool of birth and death in which one is repeatedly thrown in order to reap the fruit of these actions is unquestionably a great calamity. In this way these actions yield nothing but sorrow.

Again, Tāmasika actions are those that are performed out of ignorance and without any forethought, and which are full of evils like violence etc. (XVIII.25). The tendencies formed as a result of such actions darken the mind all the more and one is reborn after death in the species of stupid creatures, species in which the element of Tamas is predominant; this is what is meant by the statement that ignorance is the fruit of a Tāmasika act.

Here it may be contended that while discussing the effects of the three Guṇas, the Lord has abruptly taken up the question of the consequences of one's actions, which

appears to be a digression on His part. This is however, not the case. For in the foregoing verses the Lord has discussed the respective consequences of dying during the preponderance of each of the three Guṇas; therefore, a discussion of the tendencies of past actions responsible for the growth of a particular Guṇa was also essential. That is why the question of actions has been taken up. The intention is to show that the Saṁskāras or tendencies of all the three types of actions,—viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika,—remain stored up in the heart of every individual. Out of these, the type of Saṁskāras that come to the surface at a particular time stimulate corresponding impulses in the mind, and it is these impulses that take the form of actions. Actions give rise to Saṁskāras; the latter in their turn develop qualities of a corresponding type; these qualities determine our thought at the last moment; the thought of our last moment decides the nature of our next birth as well as the course of our activities in that birth. This is how the cycle goes on moving. The special results that follow from the predominance of Sāttvika and other thought at the last moment as pointed out in the foregoing verses are also dependent in a general way on the type of actions, Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, done prior to that crucial moment; it is this idea that has been sought to be conveyed in the present verse, which is therefore in no way disconnected with the context. For it is the Guṇas and Karma both which determine one's birth in a good or evil womb (IV.13).

Verses 11, 12 and 13 discussed the marks indicating the growth of the three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; thereafter the Lord pointed out the result of dying during the ascendancy of these Guṇas, one after another. This would naturally lead us to enquire why the dawn of wisdom etc., should be regarded as a token of the growth of qualities like Sattva etc. Therefore, in order to enable one to infer the existence of cause from the appearance of its effect, qualities like Sattva etc., are being shown to be responsible for the appearance of wisdom.

सत्त्वात्सञ्जायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च॥ १७॥

सत्त्वात् from the quality of Sattva (harmony); **ज्ञानम्** wisdom; **सञ्जायते** is born; **च** and; **रजसः** from the quality of Rajas (activity); **एव** indeed; **लोभः** greed; **तमसः** (even so) from the quality of Tamas (inertia); **प्रमादमोहौ** obstinate error and stupor; **भवतः** arise; **च** and; **अज्ञानम्** ignorance; **एव** also.

Wisdom follows from Sattva, and greed, undoubtedly, from Rajas, likewise obstinate error, stupor and also ignorance follow from Tamas. (17)

The use of the word 'Jñānam, (wisdom) in this verse is only symbolical; it should be regarded as inclusive of light, joy, peace and all other Sāttvika qualities.

Similarly 'Lobha' (greed) should he taken to include activity, attachment, desire, undertakings of actions with an interested motive and all other Rājasika impulses.

The use of the particle 'Eva' is intended to show that Tamoguṇa not only breeds error, stupor and ignorance but also induces sleep, sloth, opacity, inactivity and all other Tāmasika propensities.

Mentioning thus the effects of three Guṇas, viz., wisdom etc., the Lord now describes the different destinies awaiting those who are established in the three Guṇas, in order that one may be established in Sattvaguṇa and discard both Rajas and Tamas.

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ १८ ॥

सत्त्वस्थाः those abiding in Sattva; ऊर्ध्वम् upwards; गच्छन्ति wend their way; राजसाः those of a Rājasika nature; मध्ये in the middle; तिष्ठन्ति stay; जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्थाः those enveloped in the effects of Tamoguṇa; तामसाः men of a Tāmasika temperament; अधः गच्छन्ति sink down.

Those who abide in the quality of Sattva wend their way upwards; while those of a Rājasika disposition stay in the middle. And those of a Tāmasika temperament, enveloped as they are in the effects of Tamoguṇa sink down.* (18)

The indeclinable 'Ūrdhvam' in this verse covers all the regions higher than the earth, which have been referred to in verse 14 above as the 'faultless worlds gained by men of noble deeds', and in VI.41 as 'the worlds attained by men of meritorious deeds alone.' Attainment, after death, of these regions by men of a Sāttvika nature is what is meant by their 'rising to the higher regions.'

Instead of migrating after death to any other region, men of a Rājasika disposition are reborn in this mortal world as human beings. This is what is meant by their 'staying in the middle.'

'Jaghanya' means low or reproachable. The word 'Jaghanyaguṇa', therefore, stands for Tamoguṇa. And its effects such as error, stupor, ignorance, obtusenses, inactivity and sleep etc., are what are referred to here as its Vṛttis. He who remains steeped in these is said to abide in them. Such a man is spoken of as having a Tāmasika disposition. On leaving their human body these Tāmasika men are reborn in lower species such as insects, moths, beasts, birds and trees etc., or undergo terrible suffering in the form of tortures in the Infernal regions known by the names of Raurava, Kumbhīpāka and so on. This is what is meant by their sinking down.

Here it may be contended that verse 14 and 15 above state similar things about those who die during the ascendancy of the three Guṇas. This exposes the Lord to the charge of tautology. On closer examination, however, it will be found that there is no repetition here, Thus it will be seen that the words 'Yadā' and Tadā', which are adverbs of time, occur in verse 14. This shows that though a man may be naturally established in any other Guṇa, his destiny after death is determined by the Guṇa which preponderates in him at the time of death; this is what is sought to be conveyed in those verse. The present verse, however, describes the different destinies awaiting those who are naturally and permanently established in Sattva and other qualities. Hence there is no tautology here.

A reference to verse 15 above will show that it declared birth in the species of stupid creatures as the only destiny awaiting those who die during the sway of Tamoguṇa. In the present verse, however, the indeclinable 'Adhaḥ' has been interpreted to include condemnation to hell as well. The reason is not far to seek. It will be seen that verse 15 describes the lot of those men of a

* Verse 10 of Chapter XXXIX of the Āśvamedha-Parva of the Mahābhārata is similarly worded.

Sāttvika or Rājasika temperament who depart from this world when the element of Tamas is predominant in them. That is why it uses the word 'Mūḍhayoniṣu Jāyate' rather than 'Adhaḥ Gacchanti'; for it is contact with Tamoguṇa which brings about their birth in such species, as we hear of the royal sage Bharata being reborn as a deer even though he was established in Sattvaguṇa. But men of a Tāmasika disposition, who are ever enveloped in the effects of Tamoguṇa, are liable even to be condemned to hell. In XVI.20 the Lord explicitly says that being cast into demoniacal wombs, such men of a Tāmasika disposition sink into still lower depths.

In XIII.21 contact with the Guṇas was declared to be solely responsible for one's birth in good and evil wombs; accordingly, verses 5 to 18 of the present chapter described at length the essential character of the three Guṇas and the final destiny etc., of those who are bound by the evolutes of these Guṇas. The above discussion is intended to teach us that man should; first of all establish himself in Sattvaguṇa, rejecting Tamas and Rajas, and should thereafter discard the Sattvaguṇa and rise above the Guṇas. The next two verses, therefore, discuss the means of rising above the three Guṇas as well as its reward.

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति॥ १९॥

यदा when; **द्रष्टा** the seer; **गुणेभ्यः अन्यम्** anything else than the (three) Guṇas; **कर्तारम्** (as) the doer; **न** not; **अनुपश्यति** sees; **च** and; **गुणेभ्यः परम्** Me (the supreme Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified) standing entirely beyond the three Guṇas; **वेत्ति** knows (in reality); **सः** (at that time) he; **मद्भावम्** My being; **अधिगच्छति** enters into.

When the seer perceives no agent other than the three Guṇas; and realizes Me, the supreme Spirit standing entirely beyond these Guṇas, he enters into My Being. (18)

The use of the indeclinable 'Yadā', which is an adverb of time, as well as of the word 'Draṣṭā', in this verse, is intended to convey that it describes an extraordinary state of mind. The intention is to show that man in his ordinary mood looks upon himself as an embodied being and is ever conscious of his being both a doer and experiencer,—he never regards himself as a disinterested observer having no connection with his actions and their consequences. The present verse however, refers to the time when, gaining wisdom through scriptures as well as the teachings of the preceptor, man begins to conceive himself as a spectator.

At the time when the senses, mind and the vital airs etc., are carrying on all their normal functions in the shape of hearing, seeing, eating and drinking, reflection and cogitation, sleeping, sitting and so on, such a man constantly visualizes himself as established in identity with the formless and attributeless Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, and feels that it is the senses, mind, intellect and the vital airs etc., (which are evolutes of the three Guṇas) that are acting on their objects which are evolutes of the same Guṇas (V.8,9), or in other words, that it is the Guṇas that react on the Guṇas (III.28) and that he himself has no connection whatsoever with them. This is what is meant by perceiving no agent other than the Guṇas.

That which lies wholly beyond the three Guṇas is the integral Brahma or supreme Spirit, which is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. He who recognizes God as absolutely unconnected with the Guṇas and views his identity with that formless and attributeless Brahma, who perceives no entity other than the aforesaid Brahma, that is to say, perceives God and God alone everywhere and at all times, is said to know Him in reality.

What follows this knowledge is the direct realization of Brahma as one with himself. This realization constitutes what has been referred to here as entering into the being of God.

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान्।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ २० ॥

देही (this) soul; देहसमुद्भवान् causing the body; एतान् these; त्रीन् गुणान् the three Guṇas; अतीत्य transcending; जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखै from birth, death, old age and all kinds of sorrow; विमुक्तः freed; अमृतम् supreme bliss; अश्नुते attains.

Having transcended the aforesaid three Guṇas, which have caused the body, and freed from birth, death, old age and all kinds of sorrow, this soul attains supreme bliss. (20)

The use of the word 'Dehī' is intended to covney that the same soul who once regarded himself as dwelling in a body attains Brahma or God when he transcends the three Guṇas.

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Etān' with 'Guṇān' is intended to show that the verse speaks of transcending the same Guṇas whose character has been discussed in this chapter, and which tie down the soul to the body. The compound adjective 'Dehasamudbhavān' shows that this physical body, which is a conglomeration of the following twentythree categories, viz., the intellect, ego, mind, the five senses of perception, the five organs of action, the five gross elements and the five objects of senses, is nothing but an evolute of the three Guṇas born of Prakṛti, therefore, to regard it as one's own is to get attached to the three Guṇas. Even so the numeral adjective 'Trīn' emphasizes that the Guṇas are three in number, and that liberation is attained only when one has transcended them all. Having transcended Rajas and Tamas, if a man remains tied to Sattvaguṇa, even that may stand in the way of his liberation and cause his rebirth. Therefore, Sattvaguṇa too must be transcended. The Self or the Spirit is really freed from all attachment, it is altogether unconnected with the Guṇas; and yet due to ignorance, that has existed from time without beginning, the Jīva feels that he has been connected with the Guṇas. To sever this connection with the help of wisdom, and to realize oneself as identical with the formless and attributeless Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, and as altogether unconnected with the Guṇas is what is meant by transcending the three Guṇas.

Birth and death, as well as the states of infancy, youth and senility are states of the body; even so all forms of suffering, such as mental agony and bodily ailment etc., affect the body alone, which is a conglomeration of mind, senses and the vital airs etc. Therefore, those who have no real connection whatever with the body are, really speaking ever unaffected by changes in the body in the form of birth, death and old age etc., even though they remain

in the body in the eyes of the world. Therefore, severing all connection with the body through the realization of Truth is what is meant by complete immunity from birth, death, old age and sorrow. What follows next, viz., the direct realization of the immortal Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, as one's own self, which has been spoken of in verse 19 above as 'entering into the being the being of God'—this is what consitutes the attainment of supreme bliss.

Hearing the esoteric truth that having transcended the three Guṇas man attains supreme bliss during his very life-time, Arjuna puts the following question to the Lord, desiring to know the characteristics and conduct of one who has transcended the three Guṇas, as well as the means of rising above the Guṇas.

अर्जुन उवाच

कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो।
किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते॥ २१॥

एतान् these; त्रीन् three; गुणान् Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti; अतीतः he who has transcended; कैः लिङ्गैः (distinguished) by what marks; भवति is; किमाचारः (and) of what conduct; च and; प्रभो O Lord; कथम् how, by what means; एतान् these; त्रीन् three; गुणान् Guṇas; अतिवर्तते does he transcend.

Arjuna said: What are the marks of him who has risen above the three Guṇas, and what is his conduct ? And how, Lord, does he rise above the three Guṇas ? (21)

The repeated use of the adjectives 'Etān' and 'Trīn' with the word 'Guṇān' in these verses is intended to convey that the question of Arjuna relates to those very Guṇas which have been discussed at length in the present chapter.

The first question relates to the marks that have been recognized in the scriptures as distinguishing those who have transcended the three Guṇas—marks which constitute the very nature of those who have risen above the Guṇas and serve as a model for the Sādhakas to follow.

By his second question, which relates to the conduct of him who has risen above the Guṇas, Arjuna seeks to know how he behaves with those who come in contact with him, how he lives and carries on his day-to-day activities.

By addressing the Lord as 'Prabho' Arjuna hints that He was the supreme Ruler, Creator, Destroyer, and the almighty Lord of the whole universe, so that He alone was capable of throwing full light on the subject; and that was what prompted Arjuna to put the aforesaid question to Him.

The last question relates to the means of rising above the three Guṇas. That is to say, Arjuna wanted to know whether there was any way, easier than what had been stated in verse 19 above, by following which man could speedily transcend the three Guṇas without much exertion.

With reference to the above questionnaire of Arjuna, the Lord proceeds to answer in the next four verses the first two questions relating to the 'marks' and 'conduct' of him who has risen above the Guṇas.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव।
न द्वेष्टि सम्प्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति॥ २२॥

पाण्डव O son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; प्रकाशम् light (which is born of Sattva); च and; प्रवृत्तिम् activity (which is born of Rajas); च and; मोहम् stupor (which in born of Tamas); एव also; न neither; सम्प्रवृत्तानि (when) prevalent; द्वेष्टि (he who) hates; च and; न nor; निवृत्तानि having ceased; काङ्क्षति longs for.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, he who hates not light (which is born of Sattva) and activity (which is born of Rajas) and even stupor (which is born of Tamas), when prevalent, nor longs for them when they have ceased. (22)

When sloth and dullness have disappeared from the body, senses and mind, and a feeling of lightness, purity and liveliness pervades them, such a feeling is known by the name of 'Prakāśa' or light. Wisdom, tranquillity and joy are ever present in the man who has risen above the Guṇas. They are never absent in him. That is why the verse speaks of 'light' alone among the effects of Sattvaguṇa. That is to say, if light automatically appears in his body, senses and mind, he feels no aversion for it; nor does he long for its return when it has disappeared. Its appearance and disappearance make no difference to him.

The urge to undertake activities of various kinds is called 'Pravṛtti', The other effects of Rajoguṇa, such as lust, greed, craving and attachment etc., are no longer present in him who has transcended the Guṇas. Of course activity of some sort is undertaken by the body and senses of even such a man, but the same is covered by the term 'Pravṛtti'. That is why, of all the effects of Rajoguṇa, the verse emphasizes the absence of attachment and aversion for 'Pravṛtti' or activity alone. That is to say, when there is an urge in the mind of him who has risen above the Guṇas to undertake any action, or when the same is actually undertaken by his body, he feels no aversion for the same; and when this is not the case, he does not hanker for it either. The appearance and disappearance of an urge or activity make no difference to him.

'Moha' is that stupefying tendency of the mind, which induces drowsiness, dream and deep slumber etc., and robs the body, senses and mind of light, born of Sattvaguṇa. The other effects of Tamoguṇa, such as ignorance etc., cease to exist in him who has transcended the Guṇas; for ignorance cannot even enter the outskirts of wisdom and, in the absence of any doer, erring is out of question. Therefore, of all the effects of Tamoguṇa, the verse emphasizes the absence of attachment and aversion for 'Moha' or stupor alone. That is to say, when the body of the man who has risen above the three Guṇas is swayed by effects of Tamoguṇa in the shape of drowsiness, dream or deep slumber, he feels no aversion for the same; and when they relax their hold on them, he does not long for their return. Their appearance and disappearance make no difference to him.

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते।
गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते॥ २३॥

यः who; उदासीनवत् like a witness; आसीनः sitting; गुणैः by the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti; न विचाल्यते is not disturbed; गुणाः एव the Guṇas alone; वर्तन्ते move (among the Guṇas); इति so (knowing); यः who; अवतिष्ठति remains established in identity with God (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified); न इङ्गते (and) never falls off (from that state).

He who, sitting like a witness is not disturbed by the Guṇas and who, knowing that the Guṇas alone move among the Guṇas, remains established in identity with God, and never falls off from that state. (23)

'Udāsīna' is he who maintains an attitude of indifference towards incidents and things with which he has absolutely no connection whatsoever. Since the man who has risen above the three Guṇas ceases to have any connection whatsoever with those Guṇas and their evolutes, viz., the body, senses and mind and all other objects and events, he stands like a witness as it were. In reality, however, this state of indifference too is only accidental to him, he is unconnected even with that. This is what is meant by speaking of him as sitting like a witness.

Souls who are connected with the Guṇas are driven by them, even against their will, to activities of various kinds and forced to reap their fruit; they disturb their peace of mind by bringing them joy and sorrow and cause them to migrate from one species of life to another. They, however, cease to have any influence on him who has no connection with them. He remains ever unchanged and unaffected in the midst of changes undergone by the body, senses and mind, which are the products of these Guṇas, and in spite of his contact with, and separation from, various objects of the world. This is what is meant by his remaining undisturbed by the Guṇas.

The words 'Guṇāḥ vartante iti eva' in the present verse echo in the same idea as has been brought out in the latter half of III.28. The intention is to show that all organs, such as the senses, mind, intellect and vital airs etc., and all objects of senses, such as sound etc., are extensions of the Guṇas. Therefore, the moving of the senses, mind and intellect, etc., among their respective objects is nothing but the moving of the Guṇas among the Guṇas. The self or Spirit has nothing to do with them. It is eternal, conscious, wholly unattached, ever unchanging and the same as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss.

'Na iṅgate' means 'never moves'. The idea is that not only the Guṇas are incapable of shaking him who has transcended them, but he for his own part never loses his balance of mind. For once the Jīva is established in identity with the integral Brahma or Supreme Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, it no longer retains its separate identity. Who is, then, to lose his balance and how ?

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ २४ ॥

स्वस्थः (ever) established in the Self; समदुःखसुखः treating woe and joy alike; समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः regarding a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold as equal in value; धीरः wise; तुल्यप्रियाप्रियः receiving the agreeable and the disagreeable in the same spirit; तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः viewing censure and praise alike.

He who is ever established in the Self, takes woe and joy alike, regards a

clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold as equal in value, is possessed of wisdom, receives the pleasant as well as the unpleasant in the same spirit, and views censure and praise alike. (24)

'Svastha' is he who is established in his real self. The use of this word is intended to convey that he alone who is established in the Self can remain balanced in joy and sorrow. The idea is that the common run of men are, as a rule, centred in one or other of the three bodies—physical, astral and causal—all of which are evolved from 'Prakṛti' or Matter; therefore, they are centred in 'Prakṛti' (Prakṛtistha), and not in the Self. And such men only move among the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti (XIII.21), hence they cannot take joy and sorrow alike. The man who has transcended the Guṇas ceases to have any connection whatsoever with Prakṛti and its evolutes; that is why he is 'Svastha'—established in his own Self, who is the same as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. Therefore, even though circumstances of joys and sorrows continue to appear and disappear in the body, senses and mind of the man who has risen above the Guṇas and has accordingly ceased to have any connection with them, he does not identify himself with those joys and sorrows; he remains ever balanced. This is how he takes joy and sorrow alike.

A lump made out of the mixture of clay and cow dung used in plastering mud hovels, as well as the refuse of iron are known by the name of 'Loṣṭa'. Holding such a lump as well as a stone and a piece of gold as neither acceptable nor worth rejecting is what is meant by regarding them as equal in value. The statement that a 'Guṇātīta' makes no distinction between them is intended to show that whatever objects there are in the world—which people regard as either superb, second—rate or of a mean order—are equal in his eyes; for he views all objects as illusory like water in a mirage, he has no bias for or against any particular object.

A man of wisdom, i.e., who is stable of mind, is called 'Dhīra'. He who has transcended the Guṇas never loses his balance of mind even in the face of the greatest joy and sorrow (VI.21.22). That is why his reason ever remains steadfast.

That which is agreeable to the body, senses, mind and intellect, and which strengthens, helps and soothes them is said to be 'pleasant' in the eyes of the world; while that which is disagreeable and hostile to them, which wears them away and mortifies them, is considered 'unpleasant' from the worldly point of view. In spite of the contact of the body, senses and mind with multifarious objects and beings of both these types, he who has no bias for or against any of those objects is said to 'receive the ageeable and the disagreeable in the same spirit'.

Inasmuch as the Guṇātīta ceases to have any connection with the body, senses and mind, he has no bias for or against any object which comes in contact with his body etc. The idea is that to the common run of men, contact with what is agreeable and the removal of that which is disagreeable are a source of attraction and joys; whereas contact with what is disagreeable and the loss of that which is agreeable excite a feeling of aversion and sorrow. Such is, however, not the case with him who has risen above the Guṇas; he is ever completely beyond the feeling of attraction and aversion, joy and grief.

'Nindā' or censure consists in exposing the real or imaginary faults of another, while 'Stuti' or praise consists in expatiating on his virtues. Both these are related mainly to the 'name' of an individual, and partly to

his body. Since the Guṇātīta ceases to have any connection whatsoever with the 'body' and its 'name', 'censure' or 'praise' causes him neither grief nor delight; the calumniator does not excite his wrath, nor does the panegyrist earn his pleasure. He remains balanced under all circumstances. This is how he views censure and praise alike.

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते॥ २५॥

मानापमानयोः to honour and ignominy; तुल्यः (who is) indifferent; मित्रारिपक्षयोः to the cause of a friend as well as to that of an enemy; तुल्यः alike; सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी (and) has renounced the sense of doership in all undertakings; सः he; गुणातीतः one who has risen above the three Guṇas; उच्यते is spoken of (as).

He who is indifferent to honour and ignominy; is alike to the cause of a friend as well as to that of an enemy, and has renounced the sense of doership in all undertakings, is said to have risen above the three Guṇas. (25)

Honour and ingominy are mainly related to the body. Therefore, those worldly-minded people how look upon the body as their self have a liking for honour, and an aversion for ignominy. Consequently, honour brings them delight, while dishonour fills them with grief; and they love him who honours them and are even inimically disposed towards him who insults them. The Guṇātīta, however, inasmuch as he ceases to have any connection with the body, neither feels delighted when the latter is honoured, nor is he filled with grief when it is treated with ignominy. In his eyes, the object of honour and dishonour, the agent who is responsible for such treatment, as well as the acts constituting these—everything is illusory and analogous to a dream; that is why honour and ignominy do not arouse in him the feelings of attraction and aversion or delight and grief. That is how he maintains an attitude of indifference to honour and ignominy both.

Even though the Guṇātīta entertains no feeling of friendship or enmity towards any creature for his own part, and hence there is no friend or foe in his eyes, yet people find their own sentiment of friendship or enmity reflected in him. Its in this sense that the Lord speaks of him as alike to the cause of a friend and to that of an enemy. That is to say, whereas ordinary men of the world identify themselves with, and extend their love to, those who are on friendly terms with them, as well as to their relatives and well-wishers, and help them even by sacrificing their own interests, while they hate those who are inimically disposed towards them as well as their relatives and well-wishers, wish harm to them and employ their energy in actually harming them, a Guṇātīta does not. He maintains an attitude of impartiality towards both the parties, and cherishing no love or hatred for any, is habitually engaged in doing good to all alike. He harms none, has no bias for or against anyone. This is how he is alike to the cause of a friend as well as to that of an enemy.

The noun 'Ārambha' forming part of the compound word Sarvārambhaparityāgī in this verse denotes any action whatsoever. The use of this compound adjective with reference to a Guṇātīta is, therefore, intended to convey that he does not claim the doership in respect of any actions, conforming to the scriptural injunctions, habitually

performed by his body, mind and intellect by force of his Prārabdha or destiny in the interest of the world order, i.e., with the object of weaning the people from evil ways and reclaiming them to the path of rectitude.

The concluding words of this verse, viz., 'Guṇātītaḥ' sa ucyate'—'he is said to have risen above the three Guṇas',—sum up the Lord's reply to two of Arjuna's three questions. That is to say, a Guṇātīta is he who is endowed with all the virtues described in verses 22, 23, 24 and 25; it is these which constitute his distinguishing marks and these again which typify his conduct and behaviour. Therefore, so long as one's heart shows the least trace of partiality and prejudice, a sense of disparity, joy and grief, ignorance and egotism, one should know that he has not yet attained the state of a Guṇātīta.

Replying in the above words to the first two questions of Arjuna, the Lord now deals with his third question concerning the means of rising above the Guṇas. The Lord had already stated in verse 19 above that the means of attaining that state is to remain constantly established in the formless and attributeless Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, realizing himself to be a non-doer. And besides this a sustained effort to imbibe the qualities and conduct of a Guṇātīta described in the above four verses, holding them as the ideal worth approaching, is also recognized as a means of reaching that state. Nevertheless, since Arjuna desired to know whether there was any easier way other than those mentioned above, the Lord suggests such a way to Arjuna as desired by him.

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते।
स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते॥ २६॥

यः who; अव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन through the Yoga of exclusive devotion; माम् Me; सेवते constantly worships; सः he; च too; एतान् गुणान् these (three) Guṇas; समतीत्य fully transcending; ब्रह्मभूयाय for attaining Brahma; कल्पते becomes eligible.

He too who constantly worships Me through the Yoga of exclusive devotion,—transcending these three Guṇas, becomes eligible for attaining Brahma. (26)

The noun 'Bhaktiyogena', qualified by the adjective 'Avyabhicāreṇa', denotes that undivided love for God which has no selfish motive behind it and presupposes extreme reverence and which follows the belief that He alone is the highest object of worship and worth approaching for protection, that He is the supreme goal and the ultimate resort, that He is our Lord, father and mother, brother and kinsman, our greatest benefactor, and what not, and that we have none else than Him to call our own. In other words, 'Avyabhicāra Bhaktiyoga' is that exclusive love which is absolutely untainted by self-interest, egotism and infidelity, and ever complete in all respects, which is unshakeable, and altogether undivided, and which may make it unbearable for us to forget the Lord even for a moment.

And he who is constantly engaged in hearing of, singing and dwelling on the Lord's virtues, glory and pastimes, reciting and muttering His names, contemplating on His being and other such practices, who looks upon the mind, intellect, body and other organs and everything else as belonging to God, and who continues to perform all actions in a disinterested way and for His

sake in the manner enjoined by Him and as an act of service to Him, regarding himself as a mere tool in His hands, is said to worship Him through the Yoga of exclusive devotion.

The personal pronoun 'Mām' in this verse refers to God with attributes, who is all-powerful, all-pervading, all-sustaining and supremely merciful, the inner Ruler of all, the creator and destroyer of the entire universe, the disinterested friend of all, the supreme lover.

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Etān' with the substantive 'Guṇān' is intended to convey that the latter stands for the three modes of 'Prakṛti'—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—which form the subject of discussion in the present chapter; and he who ceases to have any connection whatsoever with the aforesaid Guṇas and their evolutes in the form of the body, senses, mind, intellect and all mundane objects, is said to have transcended these Guṇas.

The moment man succeeds in transcending the Guṇas as stated above, he not only becomes eligible for attaining as his very self the formless and attributeless Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, and after attaining whom nothing remains to be attained, but actually attains Him immediately after. That is what is meant by the words 'Brahmabhūyāya Kalpate'.

The above verse holds out the attainment of the formless and attributeless Brahma as the reward of worshipping Gods with attributes; verse 19 says that a Guṇātīta enters into the being of God; whereas verse 20 declares the attainment of supreme Bliss (Amṛta) as the fruit of rising above the three Guṇas. Therefore, in order to remove from the mind of Arjuna any doubt regarding the disparity of these rewards the Lord establishes their identity in the concluding verse of this chapter.

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च।
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च॥ २७॥

हि because; **अव्ययस्य ब्रह्मणः** of the (aforesaid) imperishable (supreme) Brahma; **च** and; **अमृतस्य** of immortality; **च** and; **शाश्वतस्य धर्मस्य** of the eternal virtue; **च** and (again); **ऐकान्तिकस्य सुखस्य** of unending (immutable) joy; **प्रतिष्ठा** the ground; **अहम्** I (am).

For, I am the ground of the imperishable Brahma, of immortality, of the eternal virtue and of unending (immutable) bliss. (27)

The use of the adjective 'Avyayasya' with the substantive 'Brahmaṇaḥ' shows that the latter stands here for the formless and attributeless supreme Spirit, and not for Prakṛti. And the intention of the Lord in declaring Himself as the ground of that imperishable Brahma is to convey that the latter is not different from Him, who is the same as God possessed of attributes, and that He is not different from Brahma. In reality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Brahma are not two different entities, but represent one and the same Reality. Therefore, the attainment of Brahma, referred to in the preceding verse, is the same as the realization of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or God with attributes. For, it is the one supreme Brahma or God who is said to be endowed with different forms in order that He may be worshipped by men of varying capacities. Of these, the absolute or attributeless aspect, which transcends Māyā and is inconceivable and beyond the reach of mind and speech, is one and only one; while God with attributes is both with and

without form. That which pervades the entire universe, which is all-supporting, which sustains and nourishes all, is the qualified unmanifest or formless aspect. Śrī Śiva, Śrī Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and others are the manifest forms of God, while this entire universe is His cosmic Body.

The word 'Amṛtasya' also refers to Brahma, realizing whom man becomes immortal, that is, secures lasting immunity from transmigration in the form of birth and death. By referring to Himself as the ground of immortality, the Lord shows that He is no other than that 'immortality', so that the attainment of 'immortality' referred to in verse 20 of this chapter and verse 12 of Chapter XIII is the same as His own realization.

The substantive 'Dharmasya' qualified by the adjective 'Śāśvatasya' denotes the eternal virtue which has been spoken of in the concluding verse of Chapter XII as 'Dharmyāmṛta' or the nectar of pious wisdom, and referred to in the present chapter as the marks of him who has transcended the three Guṇas. By declaring Himself as the ground of such virtue, the Lord intends to convey that, being conducive to His realization, it constitutes His own being; for he who practises it attains no other reward than Himself.

The noun 'Sukhasya', qualified by the adjective 'Aikāntikasya' stands for that everlasting supreme Bliss which has been referred to in verse 21 of Chapter V as 'undiminished joy', as 'unending bliss' in verse 21 of Chapter VI and as 'everlasting joy' in verse 28 of the same chapter. By speaking of Himself as the ground of that Bliss, the Lord shows that such everlasting supreme Bliss is the same as Himself, and nothing else than Him; hence the attainment of that Bliss is the same as His own realization.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे गुणत्रयविभागयोगो
नाम चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः॥ १४॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the fourteenth chapter entitled "The Yoga of Division of the three Guṇas".

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter XV

The present chapter is devoted to a discussion of the virtues, glory and essential character of the Supreme Person or God with attributes, who is the almighty lord, creator, and destroyer of the entire universe, the inner ruler and disinterested friend of all, all-pervading, supremely merciful, all-supporting and worth approaching for shelter. Speaking of the Kṣara Puruṣa (Kṣetra), the Akṣara Puruṣa (Kṣetrajña) and the Supreme person (God), it explains at length how God is superior to both 'Kṣara' and 'Akṣara' why He is called the 'Supreme Person', what is the value of knowing Him as the Supreme Person and how can He be realized. That is why the chapter has been designated as "The Yoga of the Supreme Person."

Title of the Chapter

Verses 1 and 2 of this chapter metaphorically refer to the universe in terms of a Pīpala tree. Declaring in the third that the beginning or end or even stability of this tree of universe are not actually perceived, the Lord exhorts us to fell it with the formidable axe of dispassion; while in the fourth He advises us to seek refuge in God, the Primeval Person, in order to realize Him in the form of the supreme State. Describing in verse 5 the marks of those who reach that supreme State, the Lord declares in the sixth that the supreme State referred to above is supremely effulgent and that there is no return from it. Thereafter, verses 7 to 11 discuss, among other things, the nature of the Jīva or embodied soul, how it migrates from one body to another alongwith the mind and senses and how, abiding in the body, it enjoys worldly pleasures through them, and declare in the end that the man of wisdom alone can know the Jīvātmā in all his states and that a man possessing an impure heart is incapable of knowing it under any circumstance. Declaring in the twelfth that the light existing in the Sun, who illumines the whole universe, as well as in the moon etc., is His own effulgence, in the thirteenth and the fourteenth He speaks of Himself as having entered the earth and thereby sustaining all beings, as nourishing all in the form of the moon, and as digesting all food in the form of the gastric fire. In the fifteenth He speaks of Himself as indwelling the hearts of all, as the source of memory, etc., of all beings, as that which ought to be known through the Vedas, and as the knower of the Vedas and the originator of Vedānta. Declaring in the sixteenth that all beings are referred to as Kṣara, and that the immutable Self is spoken of as Akṣara, He speaks in the seventeenth of the imperishable, all-pervading and all-sustaining God as the Supreme Person, and as distinct from both. Pointing out in the eighteenth the reason why the Lord is known as the Supreme Person, He concludes the chapter by glorifying in the nineteenth the man who knows Him as the Supreme Person and extolling in the twentieth the knowledge of this most esoteric teaching.

Summary of the Chapter

Link of the Discourse

Having discussed at length in verses 5 to 18 of Chapter XIV the essential character of the three Guṇas their evolutes as well as their binding nature, the destinies of a higher, lower and intermediate order awaiting those who are bound by the Guṇas and so on, the Lord pointed out in the nineteenth and the twentieth the means as well as the reward of transcending the Guṇas. Thereafter in response to Arjuna's query, He described in verses 22 to 25 the marks and conduct of him who has risen above the Guṇas, and proclaimed in verse 26 that the Yoga of exclusive devotion to God with attributes was an easier way of transcending the three Guṇas, and becoming eligible for attaining Brahma. Therefore, with the object of awakening undivided love for God, which has been referred to in Chapter XIV as the Yoga of exclusive devotion to Him, the Lord now introduces Chapter XV in order to discuss the virtues, glory and essential character of the Supreme Person or God with attributes as well as the principal means of transcending the Guṇas, viz., dispassion and self—surrender to Him. In order, first of all, to arouse dispassion towards the world, the Lord speaks of the world in the following three verses in the terms of a Pīpala tree and exhorts us to cut it down with the axe of dispassion.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम्।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित्॥ १॥

ऊर्ध्वमूलम् having its roots in God (the Primeval Person); अधःशाखम् whose stem is represented by Brahmā (the Creator); अश्वत्थम् the Pīpala tree (in the form of this creation); अव्ययम् (as) imperishable; प्राहुः they declare; छन्दांसि (and) Vedas; यस्य of which; पर्णानि (are declared to be) the leaves; तम् that (tree in the form of creation); यः who; वेद knows (in reality alongwith its root); सः he; वेदवित् (is) the knower of (the intention of) the Vedas.

Śrī Bhagavān said: He who knows the Pīpala tree (in the form of creation); which is said to be imperishable with its roots in the Primeval Being (God), whose stem is represented by Brahmā (the Creator), and whose leaves are the Vedas, is a knower of (the intention of) the Vedas. (1)

The tree in the form of this creation has sprung and grown from the Primeval Being Nārāyaṇa; this has been stated in verse 4 as well as in several other verses. That Primeval Being or God is eternal and infinite, as well as the foundation of all, and resides in the form of God with attributes in His eternal Abode situated above all other regions; therefore, He is termed as 'Ūrdhva'. The tree in the form of this cosmos has emanated from that almighty God, the Lord of Māyā; hence it is spoken of as 'Ūrdhava-Mūla' or having its root above. While other ordinary trees have their roots extending downwards below the earth's surface, this tree of creation has its root extending upwards, that is a most extraordinary phenomenon.

During the evolution of this tree of creation, Brahmā or the Creator appears first of all; hence it is Brahmā who represents its stem. The abode of Brahmā is situated in a lower plane as compared to the eternal Abode of the Primeval Being, Nārāyaṇa, and his rank too is lower than that of the Lord. It is from the Primeval Being, Nārāyaṇa, that Brahmā takes His descent and it is He who controls Him. Hence this tree of creation

has been spoken of as having its stem lower than its root.

Being subject to change, this tree of creation is perishable, transient and momentary in character; yet it has existed from time without beginning and one never finds its continuity broken; hence it is called 'Avyaya' or imperishable. For in the form of God Almighty its root is eternal and imperishable. But really speaking, this tree of creation is not imperishable. Had it been so, it would not have been stated in verse 3 below that it does not turn out what it is represented to be, nor would there be any sense in exhorting anyone to fell it with the formidable axe of dispassion.

Leaves grow out of the stem of a tree and contribute to the protection and growth of the tree. The Vedas have flowed from Brahmā, who represents the stem of this tree of creation; and it is acts enjoined by the Vedas that are conducive to the growth and protection of the world. Hence the Vedas have been represented as the leaves of this tree.

Brought forth by Māyā or the illusory power of God Almighty, this creation is liable to appear and disappear like a tree and is momentary in character; therefore, refusing to be trapped by its glamour, one should take refuge in God, who is the Lord of Māyā, and has created this universe. Knowing this truth, and cultivating dispassion and indifference towards the world he who surrenders himself to God, he alone is a real knower of the Vedas; for it is God alone who has been declared in verse 15 below as worth knowing through all the Vedas. He who comes to know this character of the tree of creation develops indifference towards it and takes refuge in God; and it is self-surrender to God that constitutes the main theme of the Vedas. This is what is meant by the statement that he who knows the tree of creation is the knower of Vedas.

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः।
अधश्च मूलान्यनुसन्ततानि कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके॥ २॥

तस्य of the aforesaid tree of creation; **गुणप्रवृद्धाः** fed by (water in the form of) the three Guṇas; **विषयप्रवालाः** having sense-objects for their tender leaves; **शाखाः** branches (in the shape of the different orders of creation such as gods, human beings and sub-human creatures etc.,); **अधः** downwards; **च** as well as; **उर्ध्वम्** upwards; **प्रसृताः** (are) extended; **च** and; **मनुष्यलोके** in the human body; **कर्मानुबन्धीनि** binding (the soul) according to (its) actions; **मूलानि** roots (too); **अधः** in the lower regions; **च** as well as (in the higher regions); **अनुसन्ततानि** are spread everywhere.

Fed by the three Guṇas and having sense-objects for their tender leaves, the branches of the aforesaid tree (in the shape of the different orders of creation) extend both downwards and upwards; and its roots, which bind the soul according to its actions in the human body, are spread in all regions, higher as well as lower. (2)

It is attachment to the Guṇas that is responsible for one's birth in good and evil wombs (XIII.21); and it is from the Guṇas again, that all the worlds as well as the bodies of living beings are evolved; this is what is meant by speaking of the branches of the aforesaid tree as fed by the Guṇas. And it is in these branches in the form of the different species of living beings that all the five objects of senses, viz., sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell appear; that is why these sense-objects have been compared to tender leaves.

All the divisions of this cosmos from

Brahmaloka (the abode of Brahmā) down to the nethermost region, known by the name of Pātāla, as well as the different orders of creation inhabiting them, constitute the numerous branches of this tree; and their spreading everywhere from the highest to the lowest region is what is meant by their extending both downwards and upwards.

The feelings of 'I' and 'mine' and the latent type of desires, which are all born of Avidyā or Nescience, represent the roots of this tree. They sway the hearts of all living beings who inhabit the various divisions of the universe from Brahmaloka down to the nethermost world, and are liable to appear and disappear, hence they have been spoken of as extending in all regions, higher as well as lower. And freedom of will is enjoyed by human beings alone and actions performed through the human body under the impulse of egotism, the feeling of meum and latent desires have been held to be the cause of bondage; that is why these roots bind the soul according to its actions in the human body. All other species are meant for experiencing pleasure and pain, they do not enjoy freedom of action; hence roots in the form of egotism, the sense of meum and latent desires, even though present in them, cannot bind the soul according to its actions in those orders of creation.

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते नान्तो न चादिर्न च सम्प्रतिष्ठा।
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूलमसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा॥ ३॥

अस्य of this tree of creation; रूपम् character; तथा of the kind it has been represented to be; इह here (on mature thought); न उपलभ्यते is not found; न (for) neither; आदिः (there is) beginning; च न nor; अन्तः end; च न nor again; सम्प्रतिष्ठा (there is) stability; एनम् this; सुविरूढमूलम् most firmly rooted; अश्वत्थम् Pīpala tree; दृढेन असङ्गशस्त्रेण with the formidable axe of dispassion; छित्त्वा felling;

The nature of this tree of creation does not on mature thought turn out what it is represented to be; for it has neither beginning nor end, nor even stability. Therefore, felling this Pīpala tree, which is most firmly rooted, with the formidable axe of dispassion; (3)

On mature thought as well as on the realization of Truth the nature of this tree of creation does not turn out what it has been represented to be in the Śāstras, what it actually appears and what we hear about it; for even in thoughtful moments we realize its perishable and momentary character, while with the realization of Truth it ceases once for all to have any connection with us. In the eyes of him who has realized the Truth, it gets extinct. That is why verse 16 speaks of it as the 'Kṣara' Puruṣa, or a perishable entity.

By speaking of the tree of creation as without beginning or end, and having no stability, the Lord intends to show its indescribable nature. The idea is that although this tree of creation is traditionally believed to have a beginning as well as an end, inasmuch as it is known to spring up at the beginning of a cosmic day and disappear at the end of it, one does not know when this serial process of its appearance and disappearance actually started and how long it will continue. Even during its actual existence it is in a state of constant flux; what it was a moment ago it ceases to be the very next moment. In this way, one does

not discover the beginning or even the stability of this tree of creation.

The roots of this tree of creation in the form of the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' and the latent type of desires, which are all born of Nescience, having been constantly nourished from time without beginning, have become extremely strong. Therefore, so long as the axe is not applied to them, the tree of creation cannot be destroyed. Even if we lop its trunk, that is to say, even if we sever all outward connection with the world, the tree of creation cannot be felled unless we give up the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as our latent desires. It is in order to bring out this idea, as well as to show that it is a most uphill task to cut these roots, that the tree has been spoken of as very firmlyrooted. Realizing through one's critical judgment the perishable and momentary character of the entire universe, he who no longer finds any joy, agreeability or attraction in the various enjoyments of this world and the next,—such as wife and children, wealth and home, honour and fame, popular esteem and heavenly bliss etc.,—in other words, he who altogether ceases to have any attachment for them is said to have developed as strong dispassion; and it is this dispassion that has been referred to here under the name of 'Asaṅga-Śastra'. And he who gives up with the help of this dispassion all thought of this world, consisting of animate and inanimate creation,—in other words, he who develops indifference towards it, and further gives up the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as his latent desires is said to have felled the aforesaid tree of mundane existence with the formidable axe of dispassion.

The Lord now tells us what further step should be taken after one has felled the tree of mundane existence with the axe of dispassion.

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी॥४॥

ततः after that; तत् that; पदम् supreme state, viz., God; परिमार्गितव्यम् should be diligently sought after; यस्मिन् to which; गताः having attained; भूयः न no more; निवर्तन्ति they return; च and; यतः from whom; पुराणी प्रवृत्तिः the flow of this beginningless creation; प्रसृता has progressed; तम् that; आद्यम् primeval; पुरुषम् Being (Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa); एव alone; प्रपद्ये I take refuge in.

Thereafter a man should diligently seek for that supreme state, viz., God, having attained to which they return no more to this world; and having fully resolved that he stands dedicated to that primeval Being (God Nārāyaṇa) Himself, from whom the flow of this beginningless creation has progressed, he should dwell and meditate on Him. (4)

The noun 'Padam' in this verse denotes that which has been spoken of as 'Ūrdhva' in the opening verse of this chapter, and as 'Mām' (Me) in verse 26 of Chapter XIV and 'Aham' in the very next verse, and which has been referred to at other places under various names, such as the supreme State, the immortal State, the supreme Goal and the supreme Abode. And striving again and again to realize through contemplation and meditation the essential character, virtues and glory of the almighty and all-sustaining God is what is meant by seeking after that supreme State. The idea is that developing

complete indifference towards the world through dispassion coupled with critical sagacity, as advised in verse 3 above, one should strive to attain that supreme State or God by taking recourse to contemplation and meditation.

The qualifying clause 'attaining to which they return no more to this world' is intended to convey that the supreme State which we have been exhorted to seek after is no other than the Lord Himself. In other words, the noun 'Padam' in this verse refers to the same almighty, all-supporting and all-sustaining God or supreme Person, attaining to whom men know no return. Verse 21 of Chapter VIII also inculcates the same idea.

Self-surrender to that Primeval Being God from whom this beginningless cycle of creation has started its career and from whom this cosmic tree has spread out its branches, is the only way to transcend this mundane existence once for all and realize Him. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the latter half of this verse.

The substantive 'Puruṣam', qualified by the adjectives 'Tam' and 'Ādyam', signifies that very God or supreme Person who has already been referred to by the words 'Tat' and 'Padam' in the first half of this verse and whose 'Māyā-Śakti' or illusive power has been declared as responsible for bringing forth and expanding this ancient cosmic tree. The use of the verb 'Prapadye' is intended to impress upon our mind that one should strive to realize that supreme State or God only by taking refuge in Him. The idea is that one should continue to strive for His realization in the aforesaid manner, taking care not to be tainted even by a tinge of pride and reposing full faith in God with a feeling of absolute and exclusive dependence on Him and relying on His strength alone.

The use of the particle 'Eva' is intended to impress on our mind that for God—Realization one should take refuge in Him and Him alone.

The Lord now points out the marks of those who succeed in realizing Him by taking refuge in the above manner in that Primeval Being or God, who is the same as the supreme State.

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।
द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसञ्ज्ञैर्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥ ५ ॥

निर्मानमोहाः free from pride and delusion; जितसङ्गदोषाः who have conquered the evil of attachment; अध्यात्मनित्याः who are in eternal union with God; विनिवृत्तकामाः whose cravings have altogether ceased; सुखदुःखसञ्ज्ञैः द्वन्द्वैः from (all) pairs of opposites going by the names of joy and sorrow; विमुक्ताः completely immune; अमूढाः the wise; तत् that; अव्ययम् imperishable; पदम् (supreme) State; गच्छन्ति reach.

Those wise men who are free from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment, who are in eternal union with God, whose cravings have altogether ceased and who are completely immune from all pairs of opposites going by the names of pleasure and pain, reach that supreme immortal state. (5)

The word 'Māna' forming part of the compound adjective 'Nirmānamohāḥ' in this verse, signifies honour, fame and prestige; while 'Moha' denotes indiscreation, error, delusion and other Tāmasika propensities. Therefore, 'Nirmānamohāḥ' are those who

not discover the beginning or even the stability of this tree of creation.

The roots of this tree of creation in the form of the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' and the latent type of desires, which are all born of Nescience, having been constantly nourished from time without beginning, have become extremely strong. Therefore, so long as the axe is not applied to them, the tree of creation cannot be destroyed. Even if we lop its trunk, that is to say, even if we sever all outward connection with the world, the tree of creation cannot be felled unless we give up the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as our latent desires. It is in order to bring out this idea, as well as to show that it is a most uphill task to cut these roots, that the tree has been spoken of as very firmlyrooted. Realizing through one's critical judgment the perishable and momentary character of the entire universe, he who no longer finds any joy, agreeability or attraction in the various enjoyments of this world and the next,—such as wife and children, wealth and home, honour and fame, popular esteem and heavenly bliss etc.,—in other words, he who altogether ceases to have any attachment for them is said to have developed as strong dispassion; and it is this dispassion that has been referred to here under the name of 'Asaṅga-Śastra'. And he who gives up with the help of this dispassion all thought of this world, consisting of animate and inanimate creation,—in other words, he who develops indifference towards it, and further gives up the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as his latent desires is said to have felled the aforesaid tree of mundane existence with the formidable axe of dispassion.

The Lord now tells us what further step should be taken after one has felled the tree of mundane existence with the axe of dispassion.

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी॥ ४॥

ततः after that; तत् that; पदम् supreme state, viz., God; परिमार्गितव्यम् should be diligently sought after; यस्मिन् to which; गताः having attained; भूयः न no more; निवर्तन्ति they return; च and; यतः from whom; पुराणी प्रवृत्तिः the flow of this beginningless creation; प्रसृता has progressed; तम् that; आद्यम् primeval; पुरुषम् Being (Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa); एव alone; प्रपद्ये I take refuge in.

Thereafter a man should diligently seek for that supreme state, viz., God, having attained to which they return no more to this world; and having fully resolved that he stands dedicated to that primeval Being (God Nārāyaṇa) Himself, from whom the flow of this beginningless creation has progressed, he should dwell and meditate on Him. (4)

The noun 'Padam' in this verse denotes that which has been spoken of as 'Ūrdhva' in the opening verse of this chapter, and as 'Mām' (Me) in verse 26 of Chapter XIV and 'Aham' in the very next verse, and which has been referred to at other places under various names, such as the supreme State, the immortal State, the supreme Goal and the supreme Abode. And striving again and again to realize through contemplation and meditation the essential character, virtues and glory of the almighty and all-sustaining God is what is meant by seeking after that supreme State. The idea is that developing

complete indifference towards the world through dispassion coupled with critical sagacity, as advised in verse 3 above, one should strive to attain that supreme State or God by taking recourse to contemplation and meditation.

The qualifying clause 'attaining to which they return no more to this world' is intended to convey that the supreme State which we have been exhorted to seek after is no other than the Lord Himself. In other words, the noun 'Padam' in this verse refers to the same almighty, all-supporting and all-sustaining God or supreme Person, attaining to whom men know no return. Verse 21 of Chapter VIII also inculcates the same idea.

Self-surrender to that Primeval Being God from whom this beginningless cycle of creation has started its career and from whom this cosmic tree has spread out its branches, is the only way to transcend this mundane existence once for all and realize Him. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the latter half of this verse.

The substantive 'Puruṣam', qualified by the adjectives 'Tam' and 'Ādyam', signifies that very God or supreme Person who has already been referred to by the words 'Tat' and 'Padam' in the first half of this verse and whose 'Māyā-Śakti' or illusive power has been declared as responsible for bringing forth and expanding this ancient cosmic tree. The use of the verb 'Prapadye' is intended to impress upon our mind that one should strive to realize that supreme State or God only by taking refuge in Him. The idea is that one should continue to strive for His realization in the aforesaid manner, taking care not to be tainted even by a tinge of pride and reposing full faith in God with a feeling of absolute and exclusive dependence on Him and relying on His strength alone.

The use of the particle 'Eva' is intended to impress on our mind that for God—Realization one should take refuge in Him and Him alone.

The Lord now points out the marks of those who succeed in realizing Him by taking refuge in the above manner in that Primeval Being or God, who is the same as the supreme State.

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।
द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसञ्ज्ञैर्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥ ५ ॥

निर्मानमोहाः free from pride and delusion; **जितसङ्गदोषाः** who have conquered the evil of attachment; **अध्यात्मनित्याः** who are in eternal union with God; **विनिवृत्तकामाः** whose cravings have altogether ceased; **सुखदुःखसञ्ज्ञैः द्वन्द्वैः** from (all) pairs of opposites going by the names of joy and sorrow; **विमुक्ताः** completely immune; **अमूढाः** the wise; **तत्** that; **अव्ययम्** imperishable; **पदम्** (supreme) State; **गच्छन्ति** reach.

Those wise men who are free from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment, who are in eternal union with God, whose cravings have altogether ceased and who are completely immune from all pairs of opposites going by the names of pleasure and pain, reach that supreme immortal state. (5)

The word 'Māna' forming part of the compound adjective 'Nirmānamohāḥ' in this verse, signifies honour, fame and prestige; while 'Moha' denotes indiscreation, error, delusion and other Tāmasika propensities. Therefore, 'Nirmānamohāḥ' are those who

do not entertain the least idea of their own superiority in point of birth, merits, wealth, power and learning etc., and who have risen above honour, fame and prestige, as well as above Tāmasika propensities like indiscretion and delusion etc.

'Jitasaṅgadoṣāh, are those who no longer entertain the least attachment for the enjoyments of this world and the next, whose mind remains unexcited even in the midst of worldly pleasures.

The word 'Adhyātma' forming part of the compound adjective 'Adhyātmanityāḥ' in this verse, stands for the essential character of God. Therefore, 'Adhyātmanityāḥ' are those who stand eternally united with God, who are never disunited from Him even for a moment and whose mood is ever unshakeable.

The word 'Kāma', forming part of the compound adjective 'Vinivṛttakāmāḥ' covers all kinds of desires of various gradations, such as craving, thirst, want, latent desire and longing etc., all of which have delicate shades of meaning. Therefore, 'Vinivṛttakāmāḥ' are those who have no desire of any kind and in any of these forms lurking in their mind.

Pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, agreeable and disagreeable, honour and ignominy, praise and censure etc., have been given the names of joy and sorrow inasmuch as they are conducive to joy and sorrow. He who transcends these, that is to say, he who is not in the least susceptible to morbid feelings such as attraction and aversion, joy and grief, etc., in the presence or absence of any of these contraries is said to be completely immune from pairs of opposites going by the names of joy and sorrow.

The word 'Amūḍhāḥ' refers to those illumined saints who are entirely free from delusion or ignorance. It is this word which stands in the relation of a substantive to all compound adjectives preceding it.

The supreme immortal state referred to in this verse is the same as the almighty and all-supporting God, whom we have been exhorted to seek after and dedicate ourselves to in verse 4 above.

This naturally leads one to enquire the nature of the supreme immortal State attained by men possessing the above marks. The Lord, therefore, proceeds to extol that supreme State, which is the same as God.

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम॥ ६॥

यत् which; गत्वा having reached; न not; निवर्तन्ते (they) return (to this world); तत् that supreme self-effulgent state; न neither; सूर्यः the sun; भासयते can illumine; न nor; शशाङ्कः the moon; न nor (even); पावकः fire; तत् that (is); मम My; परमम् supreme; धाम Abode.

Neither the sun nor the moon nor even fire can illumine that supreme self-effulgent state, attaining to which they never return to this world. That is My supreme Abode. (6)

The latter half of this verse is intended to convey that the eternal Abode of God, being the same as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, transcendent and spiritual in character, and His own manifestation, is really identical with Him. Therefore, the words 'Paramam Dhāma' in this verse denote the eternal Abode of God as well as His essential character and being etc., all taken together. In other words, that attaining to which one

reaches wholly beyond this mundane existence once for all represents His supreme Abode, free from Māyā or illusion; and that constitutes His very being. It is that which they call by such names as the Unmanifest, the Indestructible and the supreme Goal (VIII.21). With reference to It the Śruti says*:—

"Where the sun shines not, where winds blow not, where the moon sheds not her lustre, where stars twinkle not, where fire burns not, where death finds no access, where sorrows enter not and reaching where the Yogīs return not, which is the goal of the Yogīs and is hailed by gods, that is the supreme State, ever delightful, supremely blissful tranquil, enternal and ever blessed.†

The demonstrative pronoun 'Tat' occurring in the first half of this verse stands for same integral Brahma or Puruṣottama who has been referred to in verse 5 above under the name of the 'supreme immortal State', and the statement that "It cannot be illumined by the sun, moon or fire" is intended to reveal Its inconceivable, incomprehensible and ineffable character. The idea is that the sun, moon and fire, which brighten the whole universe, and even the senses of sight, mind and speech, which are respectively presided over by the three gods mentioned above,—none of these can illumine that supreme State. This should also be understood to mean that whatever luminaries other than those referred to above are believed to exist, are incapable either individually or collectively to illumine that supreme State; for it is from the light of Brahma—from a fraction of Its being and consciousness—that they all derive their light (XV.12). And this is quite in the fitness of things; for how can a luminary illumine the very source, of its light ? How can the eye, speech, mind or any other organ portray Brahma, who is entirely out of their reach ? Śruti also says:—

"Wherefrom speech alongwith mind return without having attained to It, that is Brahma or God‡ *(Brahmopaniṣad).*" Hence that immortal state is entirely beyond speech and mind etc., Its essential character can neither be represented nor explained.

Verses 1 to 3 of this chapter described the Kṣara Puruṣa under the name of the cosmic tree or the tree of mundane existence, declared the actions performed by the Akṣara Puruṣa or embodied soul in the human body and under the prompting of egotism, the sense of meum and attachment as responsible for its slavery to the Kṣara Puruṣa and finally proclaimed self-surrender to the Primal Being or Creator as the only means of securing freedom from that bondage. This leads one to enquire the nature of the Jīva which is thus bound, as well as its essential character, and further as to who knows the Jīva and how. Therefore with a view to elucidating all these points, the Lord first

---

* The Śruti also says:—

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति॥

(Kaṭhopaniṣad II.ii.15)

"The sun cannot illumine that integral Brahma or God; nor can the moon nor the stars nor even this lightning shed Its lustre on It. How, then, can this physical fire light It ? For all these reflect the light of Brahma alone when It shines; and it is by the light of Brahma that all this is illumined."

† यत्र न सूर्यस्तपति यत्र न वायुर्वाति यत्र न चन्द्रमा भाति यत्र न नक्षत्राणि भान्ति यत्र नाग्निर्दहति यत्र न मृत्युः प्रविशति यत्र न दुःखानि प्रविशन्ति सदानन्दं परमानन्दं शान्तं शाश्वतं सदाशिवं ब्रह्मादिवन्दितं योगिध्येयं परं पदं यत्र गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते योगिनः।

(Bṛhajjābāla Upa. VIII. 6)

‡ यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह।

of all depicts the nature of the embodied soul.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः।
मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति॥७॥

जीवलोके in the living organism; सनातनः जीवभूतः the eternal Jīvātmā or embodied soul; मम एव My own; अंशः (is) a particle; प्रकृतिस्थानि resting in Prakṛti; मनःषष्ठानि इन्द्रियाणि the five senses with the mind as the sixth; कर्षति (it is that which) draws (round itself).

The eternal Jīvātmā in this body is a particle of My own being; and it is that alone which draws round itself the mind and the five senses, which rest in Prakṛti. (7)

The compound word 'Jīvaloke' in this verse denotes the dwelling-place of the Jīvātmā, viz., the 'body'. It covers all the three types of bodies, viz., the physical, the astral and the causal. By declaring the Jīvātmā dwelling in these as eternal and as a particle of His own being, the Lord seeks to convey that it is He who creates, sustains and maintains the universe (XIV.3,4) by investing the multitude of Jīvas resting in their causal bodies with an astral and a physical body each; hence He is the supreme Father of all; therefore, even as a son is a particle of his father, the totality of Jīvas or embodied beings is a fragment of God. Again, there is affinity of character between God and the embodied soul; even as God is spiritual in essence, the embodied soul is essentially the same; hence the Jīva is a particle of God Himself. For, that which is spiritual itself can be a fragment of something equally spiritual, and not of that which is material. Like God Himself, the embodied soul too is without beginning or end; hence it is eternal and no other than God Himself.

Besides this, according to the monistic standpoint, the only correct interpretation is that just as the boundless expanse of space, which is equally and indivisibly present everywhere, appears as though divided due to its contact with a pitcher and a house etc., and just as the limited space existing in that pitcher etc., is reckoned as a part of the boundless space, even so God, though equally and indivisibly present everywhere, appears as if divided due to His contact with different bodies (XIII.16) and the Jīvas dwelling in those bodies are regarded as so many particles of God. This is what is meant by the Lord when He says that the embodied soul is a particle of His own being.

The use of the particle 'Eva' with 'Mama' is intended to convey that being a particle of God as shown above, the embodied soul is essentially no other than God.

The Indriyas or senses of perception are evolutes of Prakṛti; and the body in which they are located is likewise an evolute of Prakṛti; this is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the adjective 'Prakṛtisthāni' with 'Indriyāṇi'. Again, the five senses of perception and the mind—these six are mainly responsible for all sensory experiences; the organs of action too are ineffectual without them. That is why the Indriyas have been declared as only six in number, although in XIII.5 the number is mentioned to be eleven. The five organs of action should, therefore, be taken as included in the senses of perception.

When the Jīvātmā migrates from one body to another, it draws from the previous body the five senses and the mind and takes them alongwith it. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse. Because the

mind and the senses are mainly responsible for all sensory experiences, it is these six which are said to be drawn by the Jīvātmā. The word 'Manaḥ', forming part of the compound adjective 'Manaḥṣaṣṭhāni' in this verse stands for what is known as the Antaḥkaraṇa (the inner sense), which includes Buddhi (reason). And when the Jīvātmā draws the mind and the senses, it draws them through no other medium than the Prāṇas or vital airs; the six organs mentioned in this verse should, therefore, be taken to include the five organs of action as well as the five vital airs.

It may be asked here: When, how and what for does the Jīvātmā draw to itself the mind and the five senses, and what are the five senses referred to above ? The Lord answers this possible query in the following two verses.

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः।
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात्॥ ८॥

वायुः the wind; आशयात् from the seat (of odours); गन्धान् scents; इव even as (wafts); ईश्वरः (even so) the controller of the body etc., viz., the embodied soul; अपि too; यत् शरीरम् (from) the body which; उत्क्रामति casts off or leaves behind; एतानि these six (viz., the mind and the five senses); गृहीत्वा taking; च then; यत् (to that) which; अवाप्नोति it puts on; संयाति migrates.

Even as the wind wafts scents from their seats, so too the Jīvātmā, which is the controller of the body etc., taking the mind and the senses from the body which it leaves behind, forthwith migrates to the body which it acquires. (8)

The word 'Āśayāt' in this verse stands for those objects which naturally possess sweet odour, such as flowers, sandal-wood, saffron, musk and so on. The body from which the mind etc., are drawn, in other words, that which the Jīvātmā leaves behind has been compared in this verse to the seat of fragrance; while the mind etc., have been likened to the scents; for fragrance is nothing but the subtle element of a fragrant substance. Even so the Jīvātmā has been compared to the wind. Just as the wind wafts the fragrance of flowers etc., from one place to another, so does the Jīvātmā draw the astral body, which is an aggregate of the senses, mind, intellect and the vital airs, from one physical body, viz. the body which it casts off, and unites it with another, viz., that which it puts on.

The demonstrative pronoun 'Etāni' stands for the mind and the five senses, referred to in verse 7 above. 'Manas' being indicative of the inner sense or Antaḥkaraṇa as it is called, includes the intellect while the Indriyas are inclusive of the five organs of action as well as the five vital airs, as indicated in the commentary on that verse. Hence 'Etāni' in the present context stands for the astral body, which is an aggregate of the seventeen categories mentioned above. The idea in referring to the Jīvātmā by the term 'Īśwara' is to show that it is the controller and lord of all the ten Indriyas as well as of the mind and intellect; that is why it is capable of transferring them from one body to another.

Although the Jīvātmā, being a particle of God Himself, is really eternal and immovable,—it cannot migrate from one body to another (vide II.24),—yet, being connected with the astral body, it appears to move from one physical body to another through the astral body; this is what is indicated by the use of the verb 'Saṁyāti' (migrates). The same idea has been brought out in II.22 as well.

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च।
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते॥ ९॥

अयम् this (Jīvātmā); श्रोत्रम् the auditory sense or the sense of hearing; चक्षुः the sense of sight; च and; स्पर्शनम् the tactile sense or the sense of touch; च and; रसनम् the sense of taste; घ्राणम् the olfactory sense or the sense of smell; च and; मनः the mind; अधिष्ठाय dwelling in; एव only; विषयान् sense-objects; उपसेवते enjoys.

It is while dwelling in the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell, as well as in the mind, that this Jīvātmā enjoys the objects of senses. (9)

The Jīvātmā is said to dwell in the mind and the senses only when it identifies itself with these. The statement that it enjoys the objects of senses through the mind and the senses is intended to convey that, really speaking, the Self or Spirit is neither the doer of actions nor the experiencer of sense-objects or of joys and sorrows etc., as a consequence of those actions; it derives this character from its dateless connection with Prakṛti and its evolutes, which has its root in ignorance. In XIII.21 also we have seen that it is the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti who enjoys the Guṇas born of Prakṛti. The Śruti also says: "It is the Self, joined with the mind, intellect and senses that is termed as the enjoyer by the wise"* (*Kaṭhopaniṣad* I.iii.4).

The Jīvātmā has been declared as connected with the three Guṇas, as that which migrates from one body to another and as that which enjoys the objects of senses while dwelling in the body. This may lead one to enquire as to who knows this Self and how, and who is unable to know it. Anticipating this query the Lord says:—

उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वापि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम्।
विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः॥ १०॥

उत्क्रामन्तम् departing (from this body); वा or; स्थितम् dwelling (in the body); वा or (again); भुञ्जानम् enjoying (the objects of senses); गुणान्वितम् (thus) connected with the three Guṇas; अपि even; विमूढाः the ignorant; न not; अनुपश्यन्ति know; ज्ञानचक्षुषः those endowed with the eye of wisdom; पश्यन्ति realize.

The ignorant know not the soul departing from, or dwelling in the body, or enjoying the objects of senses i.e., even when it is connected with the three Guṇas; only those endowed with the eye of wisdom are able to realize it. (10)

The word 'Guṇānvitam' stands for the soul as seated in Prakṛti. The use of the particle 'Api' is intended to convey that even though the soul departs from, and dwells in, the body and enjoys the objects of senses in the presence of all, the ignorant fail to realize its true character; much less can they realize the Self devoid of all activity and existing beyond the three Guṇas.

Men of wisdom, on the other hand, who are endowed with the faculty of judgment, know the real character of the Self even when it is connected with the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti. In other words

* आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः।

they realize that the Self is really speaking entirely beyond Prakṛti, pure, unattached and the same as consciousness itself under all circumstances viz., while departing from, or dwelling in the body and enjoying the objects of senses.

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम्।
यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः॥ ११॥

यतन्तः striving; योगिनः the Yogīs; च also; आत्मनि in (their) heart; अवस्थितम् enshrined; एनम् this (self); पश्यन्ति realize; अकृतात्मानः (but) whose heart has not been purified; अचेतसः the ignorant; यतन्तः अपि even though striving; एनम् this (Self); न not; पश्यन्ति know.

Striving Yogīs too are are able to realize this Self enshrined in their heart. The ignorant; however, whose heart has not been purified, know not this Self in spite of their best endeavours. (11)

The 'striving Yogīs' too are those Sādhakas of an advanced type whose mind is pure and amenable to their control, who have been referred to in the preceding verse as endowed with the eye of wisdom and who are constantly engaged in hearing, contemplation, meditation and other such spiritual practices. The demonstrative pronoun 'Enam' stands for the Jīvātmā or embodied soul who is the subject of discussion in these verses and who is said to be enshrined in the heart in so far as he is connected with the body; and the correct knowledge of his real character, which is the same as eternal and pure Consciousness and Bliss, is what is meant by 'realizing this Self.'

'Akṛtātmānaḥ' are those whose mind is impure and unsteady, that is to say, who have neither wholly succeeded in washing off the impurities of their mind through the practice of disinterested action etc., nor ever undertaken adequate and substained efforts to steady their mind through the practice of devotion etc. And those foolish men who are devoid of intelligence are spoken of as 'Acetasaḥ'. Therefore, those men of a Rājasika and Tāmasika disposition whose mind is tainted with the evils of impurity, distraction and opacity are referred to here as 'Akṛtātmānaḥ' and 'Acetasaḥ'. Such men cannot realize the truth relating to the Self even if they persist in their effort to know it through mere study of sacred books instead of trying to purify their mind. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

In verse 10 above it was stated that fools cannot realize the Self, only those men of understanding who are endowed with the eye of wisdom can know it. The present verse, however, says that striving Yogīs alone are able to realize the Self, not those ignorant men whose mind is impure. Although these two statements appear to bring out two different ideas, they really drive at the same truth. The word 'Mūḍhāḥ' in verse 10 stands for ordinary unintelligent persons; while 'Jñānacakṣuṣaḥ' refers to those wise men who are endowed with a critical acumen. Even so the word 'Yoginaḥ' in the present verse stands for Sādhakas of an advanced type, who have a Sāttvika disposition and a critical mind; while 'Acetasaḥ' refers to men of a Rājasika and Tāmasika disposition. Therefore, while verse 10 pointed out in a general way as to who are able to know the Self and who are not, the Lord makes Himself more explicit in the present verse, where He says that while men of a discerning nature succeed in realizing the Self through sustained effort, the ignorant fail to do so in spite of their best endeavours.

Verse 6 raises the following questions in the mind of the reader, viz., (1) How is it that the sun, moon, fire and other luminaries, who light up the whole universe, cannot illumine God ? And (2) why does the soul not return to this world after attaining to the supreme abode of God ? In reply to the second question the Lord declared in verse 7 that the Jīvātmā is an eternal particle of God, and in the course of the next four verses depicted its essential character, nature and behaviour and glorified those who know its real character. In order to answer the first question the Lord now proceeds to delineate His essential character alongwith His virtues, glory and divinity in the following four verses.

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम्।
यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम्॥ १२॥

आदित्यगतम् existing in the sun; यत् तेजः the light which; अखिलम् जगत् the entire universe; भासयते illumines; च and; यत् which; चन्द्रमसि (exists) in the moon; यत् (and) which; अग्नौ (exists) in the fire; तत् that; मामकम् तेजः My effulgence; विद्धि know.

The light in the sun, that illumines the entire solar world, and that which shines in the moon and that too which shines in the fire, know that light to be Mine. (12)

By declaring that the light existing in the sun, moon and fire is His own effulgence, the Lord seeks to convey that whatever illuminating power there is in the three luminaries mentioned above, as well as in the organs presided over by these gods, viz., the eye, mind and speech, is only a part of His own effulgence. When even the light existing in all these luminaries is a part of His own effulgence, it is much easier to understand that the light existing in other objects, which derive their light from these luminaries, is God's own light. That is why the Lord says in verse 6 that the sun, moon and fire are unable to illuminate His being.

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा।
पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः॥ १३॥

च and; अहम् I; गाम् the soil; आविश्य permeating; ओजसा by (My) vital power; भूतानि (all) creatures; धारयामि I sustain; च and; रसात्मकः nectarine, full of nectar; सोमः the moon; भूत्वा becoming; सर्वाः all; ओषधीः herbs or plants in general; पुष्णामि I nourish.

And permeating the soil, it is I who support all creatures by My vital power; and becoming the nectarine moon, I nourish all plants. (13)

By mentioning the earth or soil as an illustration, the Lord thereby declares that the sustaining power which pervades the whole universe is a part of His own being. The idea is that the power of sustaining all creatures, that appears to belong to the earth, and likewise whatever sustaining power is claimed by any other substance, does not really belong to the earth or any other substance; it is a part of God's own energy or power. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

'Rasātmakaḥ' is that which has 'Rasa' or nectar as its own being or essence. By

calling the moon 'Rasātmakaḥ' the Lord seeks to convey that the moon is not only full of nectar or nectarine in essence but infuses nectar into all.

The 'Oṣadhīḥ' covers the entire vegetable kingdom consisting of trees, creepers, grass etc., and comprising all their limbs such as leaves, blossoms and fruits etc. By the latter half of this verse the Lord shows that just as the illuminating power in the moon is a part of His own effulgence, even so the nourishing power in the moon is a part of His own energy or power.

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः।
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम्॥ १४॥

अहम् I; प्राणिनाम् of living beings; देहम् आश्रितः lodged in the body; प्राणापानसमायुक्तः united with the Prāṇa (exhalation) and Apāna (inhalation) breaths; वैश्वानरः the fire; भूत्वा becoming; चतुर्विधम् अन्नम् the food of four kinds; पचामि I consume.

Taking the form of fire lodged in the body of all creatures and united with the Prāṇa (exhalation) and Apāna (inhalation) breaths, it is I who consume the four kinds of food. (14)

The fire which maintains the temperature in the body and helps in the digestion of food is referred to here as 'Vaiśvānaraḥ'. Food has been classified in Indian dietetics under four main heads according to the process of swallowing it. They are as follows: (i) Bhakṣya (solid food that requires to be masticated before it can be swallowed, e.g., bread, rice, cake etc.), (ii) Bhojya (that can be directly swallowed without being masticated, e.g., gruel, pudding; curds, curry etc.), (iii) Lehya (that which is licked with the tongue, e.g., honey, caṭanī (sauce) etc.) and (iv) Coṣya (that which is sucked, e.g., the juice of sugarcane, mango etc.). What the Lord seeks to convey by the latter half of this verse is that just as the illuminating power in the fire is a part of His own effulgence even so the heating power in it, i.e., its digestive and appetizing power is also a part of His energy or potency.

Developing in this way the idea adumbrated in X.41, the Lord declared in the foregoing verses that the illuminating, sustaining, nourishing, digesting and all other powers are a part of His own power or energy. In other words, just as it is a part of the same electric power that is instrumental in agitating the air by rotating the fan, diffusing light by lighting up electric lamps, working the flour mill, boiling water etc., and manifesting sounds through the radio etc., even so it is a part of God's own energy which operates in illumining through the sun, moon and fire etc., sustaining through earth etc., nourishing through the moon and digesting food through the gastric fire. So saying, the Lord now proceeds to delineate His essential character marked by virtues such as omnipresence, omniscience etc., and declares Himself as worth knowing in everyway.

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम्॥ १५॥

अहम् I; सर्वस्य of all; हृदि in the heart; सन्निविष्टः (remian) seated (as the inner controller);

च and; मत्तः (proceed) from Me; स्मृतिः memory; ज्ञानम् knowledge; च and; अपोहनम् the ratiocinative faculty; च again; सर्वैः वेदैः through all the Vedas; अहम् एव I alone; वेद्यः (am) worth knowing; वेदान्तकृत् the father of Vedānta; च and; वेदवित् the knower of the Vedas (too); अहम् एव I alone (am).

It is I who remain seated in the heart of all creatures as the inner controller of all; and it is I who am the source of memory, knowledge and the ratiocinative faculty. Again, I am the only object worth knowing through the Vedas; I alone am the father of Vedānta and the knower of the Vedas too. (15)

Although God is equally present everywhere, He is particularly seated in the heart of all creatures as the inner controller of all; hence the heart is the special seat of His manifestation. That is why the Lord declares more than once that He is enshrined in the hearts of all (XIII.17; XVIII.61); for He is directly perceived in the heart of those whose mind is pure and pellucid.

'Smṛti' consists in recollecting any object or incident that has been actually seen or heard or perceived in any other way in the past. The faculty of ascertaining the real character of any object is called Jñāna. 'Ūhana' is a general term covering doubt, misapprehension and all other forms of fallacious reasoning or judgment; and the removal of such doubts etc., is called 'Apohana'. It is God Himself, the inner Ruler seated in the heart of all, who rouses the above-mentioned faculties in the minds of all according to their respective Karmas. This is what is meant by the Lord when He says that He is the source of memory etc.

God is the sole objective of the Vedas. In other words, whatever is taught in the Vedas, no matter whether it relates to the ritual (Karma), worship (Upāsanā) or spiritual knowledge (Jñāna), ultimately aims at arousing a feeling of aversion towards the world and enabling aspirants of all grades and qualifications to realize God. Therefore, they alone who realize God through the Vedas correctly understand them. Those, on the other hand, who remain entangled in worldly enjoyments do not correctly understand the Vedas.

'Vedānta' means arriving at the real meaning or intention of the Vedas. In other words, resolving all doubts relating to the Vedas and reconciling all contradictions in God is what is meant by Vedānta. By proclaiming Himself as the father of Vedānta, the Lord seeks to convey that it is God alone, who brings solace to man by truly reconciling all apparent conradiction in the Vedas. And it is He, who knows the correct intention of the Vedas. This is what He means by declaring Himself as the only 'Vedavid' (knower of the Vedas).

Discussing in verses 1 to 6 the tree of creation and the advisability of uprooting it by strong dispassion, self-surrender to God, the marks of those who succeed in realizing God, and the glory of the supreme Abode of God, which is the same as God Himself, the Lord wound up the discussion relating to the Kṣara Puruṣa. Taking up from verse 7 the discussion relating to the worshipper or the Akṣara Puruṣa, also known by the name of Jīva, the Lord described his essential character, power, nature and behaviour in the following four verses and wound up the topic by glorifying the knower of the Self. From verse 12 He started the discussion relating to the Puruṣottama or supreme Person, who is the object of worship for the Jīva, and concluded the discussion in the fifteenth, describing in four verses the virtues, glory and essential character of God. Now,

in order to recapitulate the substance of the three topics till the end of the chapter, the Lord delineates in the following verse the essential character of the Kṣara and Akṣara Puruṣas.

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च।
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते॥ १६॥

लोके (there are) in this world; क्षरः the perishable; च and; अक्षरः the imperishable; एव too; इमौ these; द्वौ two kinds of; पुरुषौ Puruṣas; सर्वाणि भूतानि (the bodies of) all beings; क्षरः (are spoken of as) the perishable; च and; कूटस्थः the Jīvātmā or embodied soul; अक्षरः the imperishable; उच्यते is called.

The perishable and the imperishable too—these are the two kinds of Puruṣas in this world. Of these, the bodies of all beings are spoken of as the perishable; while the Jīvātmā or the embodied soul is called imperishable. (16)

The use of the two adjectives 'Dvau' and 'Imau' with 'Puruṣau' is intended to convey that the two categories mentioned in this verse under the names of 'Kṣara' and 'Akṣara' form part of the three categories that are being discussed in the present chapter. And the word 'Puruṣau' refers to no other than the two categories discussed under the names of the 'Aparā and 'Parā' Prakṛtis in Chapter VII (verses 4-5), under the names of 'Adhibhūta' and 'Adhyātma' in Chapter VIII (verses 4 and 3), under the names of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' in Chapter XIII (verse 1) and under the names of 'Aśvattha' and 'Jīva' in this very chapter. By speaking of the one as 'Kṣara' and the other as 'Akṣara' the Lord seeks to convey that the two are entirely different from each other.

The word 'Bhūtāni, in this verse denotes all the three bodies of a Jīva, viz., the physical, the astral and the causal. It is these three types of bodies that have been referred to under the collective name of 'Kṣetra' in the opening verse of Chapter XIII and their constituent elements enumerated in verse 5 of the same chapter. Understood in this light the word 'Bhūtāni', qualified by the adjective 'Sarvāṇi' would come to mean the entire world of matter. This world of matter is perishable and transient. This is what is borne out by such statements as 'All these bodies have been spoken of as perishable' (II.18) and 'All perishable objects are Adhibhūta' (VIII.4). The word 'Kūṭastha' denotes the Self dwelling in all bodies. The Self continues to be the same under all circumstances, it never changes; hence it is termed as 'Kūṭastha' or immutable. And it is beyond decay, destruction or extinction; hence it is imperishable.

Describing thus the essential character of the Kṣara and Akṣara Puruṣas, the Lord now discusses in the following two verses the essential character of the Supreme Person or God, who is superior to both, and also tells us what has earned Him the title of Puruṣottama (the Supreme Person).

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः।
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः॥ १७॥

उत्तमः पुरुषः the Supreme Person; तु however; अन्यः (is yet) other (than both these);

यः who; लोकत्रयम् (all) the three worlds; आविश्य having entered; बिभर्ति upholds and maintains (all); अव्ययः ईश्वरः the imperishable Lord; परमात्मा (and) the supreme Spirit; इति as; उदाहृतः has been spoken of.

The Supreme Person is yet other than these, who, having entered all the three worlds, upholds and maintains all, and has been spoken of as the imperishable Lord and the supreme Spirit. (17)

The 'Uttama Puruṣa' mentioned in this verse is no other than the Supreme Person or God, who is eternal, pure, enlightened free, all-powerful, supremely compassionate and full of all virtues. The use of the particle 'Tu' and the adjective 'Anyaḥ' is intended to distinguish God from the 'Kṣara' and Akṣara' Puruṣas mentioned in the preceding verse. The intention is to show that the Supreme Person is distinct from and far superior to both.

The words 'Yo lokatrayam āviśya bibharti' in the latter half of this verse constitute a definition of the Supreme Person or Puruṣottama. In other words, the Supreme Person or Puruṣottama is no other than the all-supporting and all-pervading God who, having entered the whole universe, upholds the two categories 'Kṣara' and 'Akṣara' referred to under the common name of 'Puruṣa', and maintains all living beings.

The words 'Who is spoken of as the imperishable Lord and the Supreme Spirit' constitute another definition of the Supreme Person. The idea is that the Puruṣottama referred to in this verse is no other than the Supreme Spirit who, having interpenetrated all the three worlds, perishes not even after their dissolution and remains ever unaffected and unchanged, who is the Controller and Ruler as well as the almighty Lord of both the 'Kṣara' and 'Akṣara' Puruṣas and is at the same time beyond all Guṇas, untainted and the very Self of all.

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* contains the following definition of the three categories—Kṣara, Akṣara and Īśvara:—

"Kṣara is the same as Pradhāna or Prakṛti; while its enjoyer, the immortal Self, is the Akṣara. The one Deity (Puruṣottama) rules over both Prakṛti and Ātmā" (I.10).*

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः।
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः॥ १८॥

यस्मात् because; अहम् I; क्षरम् the perishable (world of matter, also called the Kṣetra); अतीतः (am wholly) beyond; च and; अक्षरात् to the imperishable (soul); अपि too; उत्तमः (am) superior; अतः therefore; लोके in the world; च and; वेदे in the Vedas (too); पुरुषोत्तमः (as) the Puruṣottama (the Supreme Person); प्रथितः अस्मि am known.

Since I am wholly beyond the perishable world of matter of Kṣetra, and am superior even to the imperishable soul, hence I am known as the Puruṣottama in the world as well as in the Vedas. (18)

By using the personal pronoun 'Aham' ('I') in this verse, the Lord unfolds to Arjuna the supreme mystery that He Himself is the Puruṣottama as defined in the preceding verse.

By speaking of Himself as beyond the

* क्षरं प्रधानममृताक्षरं हरः क्षरात्मानावीशते देव एक।

perishable, the Lord seeks to convey that He is absolutely unconnected with, and entirely different from, the Kṣara Puruṣa. In other words, He is wholly unattached to the entire world of matter, which is nothing but a conglomeration of the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti and is perishable by nature, and which has been referred to in Chapter XIII under the name of 'Śarīra' (body) and 'Kṣetra' (field). By calling Himself superior to the imperishable, the Lord intends to show that He is certainly not beyond the imperishable just as He is beyond the perishable; for the soul, being a part of His own being, is immortal and spiritual. Yet He is undoubtedly superior to the soul inasmuch as, while the soul rests in Prakṛti, He is beyond Prakṛti, i.e., wholly above the Guṇas. Hence, while the soul has limited knowledge, He is all-knowing; the soul is the controlled, while He is the controller; the soul is the worshipper, while He is his lord and object of worship; the soul has limited powers, while He is all-powerful. Thus He is superior to the soul in every-way.

The indeclinables 'Yasmāt' and 'Ataḥ', which are generally used to indicate a cause and effect respectively, are intended to show that what has been stated in the first half of this verse justifies the claim of the Lord to the title of 'Puruṣottama'.

The Lord now proceeds to glorify the man who thus recognizes Him as the Supreme Person, and gives below his distinctive marks.

यो मामेवमसम्मूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम्।
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत॥ १९॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; यः असम्मूढः the wise man who; माम् Me; एवम् in this way; पुरुषोत्तमम् as the Supreme Person; जानाति realizes; सः that; सर्ववित् all-knowing man; सर्वभावेन with his whole being; माम् Me (the all-pervading Lord) alone; भजति (constantly) worships.

Arjuna, the wise man who thus realizes Me as the Supreme Person,—knowing all, he constantly worships Me (the all-pervading Lord) with his whole being. (19)

The indeclinable 'Evam' refers to what has been stated in the preceding two verses.

The personal pronoun 'Mām' in this verse stands for the almighty, all-supporting and all-pervading God, who is responsible for the creation, maintenance and destruction etc., of the whole universe, the greatest friend and undisputed Ruler of all, adorned with all good qualities, supremely compassionate, the greatest lover and the inner controller of all. And he who is fully convinced and reverently believes that such a God is superior to both the Kṣara and Akṣara Puruṣas as indicated in the preceding two verses, that He is the supreme Puruṣa who is both beyond the Guṇas and adorned with all good qualities, who is with and without form at the same time, and who is manifest as well as unmanifest, is said to know such God as 'Puruṣottama.'

'Asammūḍha' (undeluded) is he whose knowledge is free from doubt, misapprehension and other faults, and who has no tinge of delusion about him. The use of this word is therefore, intended to convey that he alone truly knows, who recognizes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the almighty Lord or Supreme Person Himself, and refuses to believe that he was an ordinary human being.

'Sarvavid' is he who knows full well

all that is worth knowing. In this Chapter all entities have been discussed under three heads, viz., Kṣara. Akṣara and Puruṣottama. Therefore, he who has not only realized the true character of both Kṣara and Akṣara, but knows the reality about Puruṣottama too, who is far superior to both,—he alone is 'Sarvavid' or one who possesses true knowledge of all entities; hence he has been declared as such.

He who recognizes the Lord as Puruṣottama shifts his love from the entire universe and focusses it wholly and solely on God, the supreme Beloved. He employs his reason in reposing full faith in the virtues, glory, truth, mystery, sports, essential character and greatness of God. He devotes his mind to the reverent and loving thought of His names, virtues, glory, pastimes and essential character etc., employs his ears in hearing them, speech in reciting and eyes in seeing them and renders services to Him according to His behests, taking everything as belonging to Him and recognizing His presence everywhere and gratifying all through the performance of His obligatory duties. This is how he worships Him with his whole being. And the fact that such a man 'worships Him with his whole being' has been mentioned simply in order to distinguish him as one who recognizes the Lord as Puruṣottama. The idea is that he who comes to recognize the Lord as beyond the Kṣara and superior to the Akṣara; constantly worships God and God alone as mentioned above: this is what constitutes the test of his recognizing the Lord as Puruṣottama.

Thus glorifying the man who recognizes Him as Puruṣottama, the Lord now concludes the chapter by pointing out the reward of grasping the teaching imparted in this chapter, which He declares as most esoteric.

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ।
एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत॥ २०॥

अनघ O sinless one; भारत Arjuna; इति thus, in this way; इदम् this; गुह्यतमम् most esoteric; शास्त्रम् gospel or teaching; मया by Me; उक्तम् (has been) imparted; एतत् this; बुद्ध्वा grasping (in essence); बुद्धिमान् wise; च and; कृतकृत्यः fully satisfied; स्यात् (man) becomes.

Arjuna, this most esoteric teaching has thus been imparted by Me; grasping it in essence man becomes wise and his mission in life is accomplished. (20)

By addressing Arjuna as 'Anagha' (sinless), the Lord seeks to convey that Arjuna had a pure and unsullied heart, hence he was qualified to hear and assimilate His most esoteric teaching.

The noun Śāstram' qualified by the adjective 'Idam' and preceded by the indeclinable 'Iti' refers to the chapter which is going to conclude with the present verse; viz., Chapter XV. 'Idam' signifies that which is still in progress and 'Iti' marks the end of it. They thus refer to the chapter which is just going to conclude. And the chapter has been designated as 'Śāstra' just by way of respect.

By speaking of this teaching as 'Guhyatamam' the Lord seeks to convey that the virtues, glory, truth and mystery of God with attributes form the principal theme of this chapter; hence it should be kept most secret. The Lord does not reveal before all and sundry His virtues, glory, truth and divinity as He has done in this chapter; therefore, He expects that Arjuna too should

not communicate this secret to an undeserving person. And since this teaching has been imparted by the almighty and all-knowing God Himself, it is the quintessence of all the Vedas and other sacred books. This is what the Lord seeks to impress on Arjuna's mind by stressing the fact that the teaching has been imparted by Himself—'Mayā' uktam'.

He who, having fully realized the virtues, glory, truth and essential character etc., of the Lord, comes to recognize Him as no other than the Supreme Person mentioned in verses 17 and 18 above, is said to have grasped this teaching in essence. His wisdom consists in directly realizing that Supreme Person or God; and the man who realizes God will have discharged all his obligations—attained the fruit of them all. This is what is meant by his having accomplished the mission of his life.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे पुरुषोत्तमयोगो
नाम पञ्चदशोऽध्याय:॥ १५ ॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the fifteenth chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Supreme Person."

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter XVI

In the present chapter the Lord discusses separately and in detail, under the name of divine properties, moral virtues and practices which are godly in character and conducive to God-realization, and under the name of demoniac properties, evil propensities and immoral practices which are devilish in character. This He does in order that one may adopt the former and reject the latter after properly distinguishing between them. Hence this chapter has been designated as the "Yoga of Discrimination between the godly and demoniac properties."

Title of the Chapter

Describing in detail in verses 1 to 3 the marks of him who is born with divine properties, the Lord discusses in brief the demoniac properties in the fourth. In the fifth He declares that the divine properties are conducive to liberation, while the demoniac propensities lead to bondage, and heartens Arjuna by telling him that he is born with divine virtues. In the sixth He mentions two types of created beings—the godly group and the devilish group—and proposes to discuss the demoniac properties in detail. Thereafter, verses 7 to 20 describe the evil impulses, evil propensities and evil practices of men possessing a devilish nature, as well as the evil destiny that awaits them after death. Declaring in the twentyfirst that lust, anger and greed, which are the chief among the demoniac propensities, are the three gates of hell, the Lord proclaims in the twentysecond that the Sādhaka who is free from these attains the supreme goal by practising the divine virtues in a disinterested spirit. Condemning in the twentythird those who having cast aside the scriptural ordinance are guided by their own will, the Lord concludes the chapter by insisting in the twentyfourth that one's actions should be guided by the scriptures.

Summary of the Chapter

In verse 15 of Chapter VII and verses 11 and 12 of Chapter IX it was stated that fools who have embraced the demoniac and fiendish nature despise the Lord rather than adore Him. And in verses 13 and 14 of Chapter IX the Lord declared that exalted souls who have embraced the divine nature, knowing Him as the prime source of all lives and imperishable, constantly worship Him in everyway with exclusive love. But as other topics continued to engage His attention, the distinguishing marks of the divine and demoniac temperaments could not be discussed on that occasion. Then, in verse 19 of Chapter XV it was pointed out that those illumined saints who recognize the Lord as the Supreme Person worship Him with their whole being. This naturally fills one with curiosity as to the marks of those saintly beings who have embraced the divine nature and, having recognized the Lord as the Supreme Person, worship Him with their whole being; as well as of those ignorant men who, having embraced the demoniac nature, adore Him not. Therefore, in order to describe in detail the distinctive marks and disposition of the two types of men, the

Link of the Discourse

Lord now introduces the present chapter. The opening three verses of this chapter discuss in detail the natural characteristics of men of a Sāttvika disposition who are endowed with divine properties.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः।
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम्॥ १॥

अभयम् (absolute) fearlessness; **सत्त्वसंशुद्धिः** perfect purity of mind; **ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः** constant fixity in the Yoga of meditation for the sake of Self-realization; **च** and; **दानम्** charity (in its Sāttvika form); **दमः** control of the senses; **यज्ञः** worship of God and other deities, as well as of one's elders, including the performance of Agnihotra (pouring oblation into the sacred fire) and other sacred duties; **स्वाध्यायः** study or teaching of the Vedas and other sacred books and chanting of God's names and praises; **तपः** Suffering hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations; **च** and; **आर्जवम्** straightness of mind as well as of the body and senses;

Absolute fearlessness, perfect purity of mind; constant fixity in the Yoga of meditation for the sake of Self-realization, and even so charity in its Sāttvika form, control of the senses, worship of God and other deities as well as of one's elders including the performance of Agnihotra (pouring oblations into the sacred fire) and other sacred duties, study and teaching of the Vedas and other sacred books as well as the chanting of God's names and praises, suffering hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations and straightness of mind as well as of the body and senses; (1)

Nervous excitement caused by the apprehension of losing something which is agreeable and meeting with something which is unwelcome is called 'Bhaya' or fear, e.g., the fear of loss of prestige, fear of ignominy, fear of scandal, fear of ailment, fear of punishment by law, fear of ghosts and evil spirits and fear of death etc. The total absence of all these fears is called 'Abhaya' or absolute fearlessness.

The inner sense or mind is called 'Sattva'. Hence Sattva-saṁsuddhi' means the complete elimination from the mind of all morbid feelings such as partiality and prejudice, delight and grief, the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' infatuation and jealousy etc., as well as of impure and sinful impulses of all kinds.

True knowledge of God is called 'Jñāna', and constant absorption of mind in the thought of a God with a view to His realization is what is meant hereby 'Jñānayogavyavasthiti'.

'Dāna' (charity) consists in giving away food, clothing, knowledge, medicine and other things in a disinterested spirit, as a matter of duty and with due regard to the place, time, and recipient of the gift (XVII.20).

'Dama' consists in diverting the senses from their objects and bringing them under one's own control.

'Yajña' means offering worship to God and other deities, the Brāhmaṇas or members of the priestly class, saints, a newcomer and one's own parents and other elders, and includes all sacrificial performances such as Havana (offering daily oblations to the sacred fire), Balivaiśvadeva (offering a portion of the daily meal to all creatures and presenting oblations to fire before meals) etc.

'Svādhyāya' includes the study and teaching of the Vedas and all other sacred books dealing with the virtues, glory, truth, essential character and divine pastimes of God, such as the great Epics and Purāṇas, and the chanting of His names and praises etc.

'Tapas' consists in mortifying one's mind and senses by suffering hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations. This is, however not the same 'Tapas' as has been discussed in Chapter XVII under three separate heads, in so far as it relates to the body, speech and mind; for items like non-violence, truthfulness, purity 'Svādhyāya' and Ārjava etc., which have been included in 'Tapas' in that chapter, have been mentioned here separately.

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम्।
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम्॥ २॥

अहिंसा non-violence in thought, word and deed; सत्यम् truthfulness and geniality of speech; अक्रोध: absence of anger even on provocation; त्याग: disclaiming the doership in respect of action; शान्ति: quietude or composure of mind; अपैशुनम् abstaining from malicious gossip; भूतेषु towards all creatures; दया compassion; अलोलुप्त्वम् absence of attachment to the objects of senses even during their contact with the senses; मार्दवम् mildness; ह्री: a sense of shame in violating the injunctions of the scriptures or even established usage; अचापलम् (and) abstaining from frivolous pursuits;

Non-violence in thought, word and deed, truthfulness and geniality of speech, absence of anger even on provocation, disclaiming doership in respect of actions, quietude or composure of mind, abstaining from malicious gossip compassion towards all creatures, absence of attachment to the objects of senses even during their contact with the senses, mildness, sense of shame in transgressing against the scriptures or usage, and abstaining from frivolous pursuits; (2)

Inflicting pain in any shape, whether in an intense, moderate or mild form, out of greed, ignorance or anger, on any living being whatsoever at any time or place personally or causing another to do so even countenancing anyone who does so,—all these are acts of violence indeed. Taking a vow not to perpetrate such violence on any account through mind, speech or body, that is to say, wishing ill to none, taking particular care not to use abusive language, harsh words or harmful language with respect to another, and refusing to kill, torment or harm anyone through one's body—all these are comprised in nonviolence.

Truthfulness or veracity consists in taking all possible care to speak agreeable and wholesome words in an honest attempt to represent faithfully to others what has been seen, heard or experienced through the senses and mind.

The excitement coupled with a feeling of aversion that a man feels in his mind either due to his bad temper or when he is subjected to insult, injury or calumny, or when someone acts against his will, abuses him or commits a wrong in his presence, is 'Krodha' in its internal form. This internal feeling of indignation subsequently seeks outer expression in the form of a burning sensation in the body and mind, a distortion of the face and blood-shot eyes. All these betoken an advanced stage of anger. Both these stages, the former of which burns the angry man

alone, while the latter burns the object of anger too, are covered by the term 'Krodha' or anger. Absence of anger in all these forms is referred to in this verse as 'Akrodha'.

'Tyāga' or renunciation, in this verse, consists in disclaiming the doership in respect of all actions. Such renunciation is preceded, in the case of the Jñānayogī, by the belief that it is the Guṇas alone that are acting on the Guṇas, and that the Sādhaka has nothing to do with those actions; while the devotee believes that he is a mere puppet in the hands of the Lord, that it is the Lord who causes his mind, speech and body to perform all their functions just as He pleases that the devotee is neither capable of doing anything by himself nor does he actually do anything. Renunciation can also be taken to consist in giving up the feeling of meum, attachment, the desire for fruit and self-interest in respect of one's actions even though continuing to perform one's obligatory duties. Or again it may mean the renunciation of all objects, thoughts and activities which hinder one's spiritual progress.

'Śānti' is that Sāttvika type of placidity which appears in a mind which is free from all distractions and has banished all thought of the world.

Discovering or exposing the faults of others, and even so reproaching or slandering another go by the name of 'Paiśuna'. And total absence of this tendency is called 'Apaiśuna'.

The urge that a man feels in his mind to relieve by any means whatsoever the suffering of any living being who is found in distress, without expecting any return, and to make him happy in everyway is called Dayā or compassion. Taking a vow not to inflict pain on another is called 'Ahimsā' or non-violence, and the impulse to make others happy is known by the name of 'Dayā'. Here lies the difference between 'Ahimsā' and 'Dayā'.

Feeling attracted towards the objects of senses on their coming into contact with the senses, and the longing that is felt in the mind for the possession of such objects when one sees others enjoying them is called 'Loluptva'; and the total absence of this 'Loluptva' is what they call 'Aloluptva'.

Shedding sternness in every form when the mind, speech and behaviour of a man become extremely mild, he is said to have acquired what is known as 'Mārdava.

Having resolved not to violate the injunctions of the Vedas and other sacred books or even the established usage, the hesitation that one feels in violating them is known as 'Hrī'.

Rocking one's hands and feet etc., tearing pieces of straw, scratching the ground under one's feet indulging in incoherent talks and wild thoughts and similar other fruitless activities of the hands and feet, speech and mind constitute what is known as 'Cāpala'; it is also called 'Pramāda; 'Acāpala' is the total negation of 'Cāpala'.

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता।
भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत॥ ३॥

तेजः sublimity; क्षमा forbearance; धृतिः fortitude; शौचम् external purity; अद्रोहः bearing enmity to none; नातिमानिता absence of self-esteem; भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; दैवीम् सम्पदम् the gifts divine; अभिजातस्य of him who is born with; भवन्ति are (the marks).

Sublimity, forbearance, fortitude, external purity, bearing enmity to none and

absence of self-esteem—these are the marks of him, who is born with the divine gifts, Arjuna. (3)

'Tejas' is that peculiar property, possessed by noble souls, which compels even those who are given to the pursuit of the pleasures of sense and are of a vile disposition to desist from wrong-doing in their presence and take to noble pursuits according to their advice.

Harbouring no intention to punish, or cause to be punished, a wrong-doer, having no inclination to retaliate, treating his offences as no offence at all and ignoring them altogether—this is what they call 'Kṣamā' or forbearance. 'Akrodha' has been characterized as a mere negation of anger, whereas forbearance precludes the desire even to punish an offence according to law. Here lies the difference between 'Akrodha' and 'Kṣamā'.

To remain self-possessed even when confronted with the greatest calamity, danger or sorrow, and not to deviate from the path of righteousness or duty under the influence of lust, anger, fear or greed in called 'Dhṛti' or fortitude.

Money is purified through honest and truthful dealings, even so one's diet is purified through provisions purchased with such money, one's conduct is edified through appropriate behaviour and the body is purified through cleaning with water and clay etc. All this is included in external purity. Internal purity has been separately mentioned in verse 1 under the name of 'Sattvasaṁśuddhi'.

Bearing no grudge or enmity in the least degree even towards those who behave as enemies is called 'Adroha'.

Regarding oneself as superior, exalted or worthy of adoration and cherishing a special craving for honour, fame, prestige and respect etc., and feeling overjoyed on attaining these even though not hankering after them,—this is what they call 'Atimānitā' or overestimating oneself. And the total negation of these is called 'Nātimānitā'.

'Deva' means God. Therefore, 'Daivī Sampad' is a collective name for the noble virtues and practices which are conducive to God-realization and are divine in character. They are also known by the name of 'Daivī Prakṛti' or divine nature.

The latter half of this verse is intended to convey that the above two and a half verses viz., verses 1 and 2 and the first half of verse 3 enumerate under the name of 'Daivī Sampad' twentysix noble virtues and practices. Therefore, he alone who is naturally endowed with these virtues or who has acquired them through practice is said to be possessed of 'Daivī Sampad' or the divine gift.

Having thus described the marks of him who is endowed with 'Daivī Sampad', which is worth acquiring, the Lord now discusses in brief the marks of him, who is possessed of demoniac properties, which are worth renouncing.

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च।
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ सम्पदमासुरीम्॥ ४॥

पार्थ O son of Pārthā, Arjuna; दम्भः hypocrisy; दर्पः arrogance; च and; अभिमानः pride; च and; क्रोधः anger; पारुष्यम् sternness; च and; अज्ञानम् ignorance; एव too; आसुरीम् सम्पदम् demoniac properties; अभिजातस्य (as marks) of him who is born with.

Hypocrisy, arrogance and pride, and anger, sternness and ignorance too,—these are the marks of him, who is born with demoniac properties. (4)

'Dambha' or hypocrisy consists in posing as a virtuous man, a devotee, a man of wisdom or a saint or making a false show of peity, generosity, devotion, religious discipline or practice of Yoga or assuming any other role which may serve one's end, for the sake of honour, fame, prestige and respect etc., out of cupidity or with intent to cheat another.

'Darpa' or arrogance is the feeling of pride arising out of a consciousness of one's learning, wealth, extensive family, noble birth, youth, strength and power etc., on account of which man look down upon others and shows disrespect to them.

'Abhimāna' or pride consists in regarding oneself as superior, exalted or worthy of adoration, hankering after honour, fame, prestige and respect etc., and feeling delighted on attaining these.

The excitement coupled with a feeling of aversion that a man feels in his mind either due to his bad temper or due to association with men who are irascible by nature, or when he is subjected to insult, injury or calumny, or when someone acts against his will, abuses him or commits a wrong in his presence—which rouses a spirit of revenge in his mind, suffuses his eyes with blood, makes his lips throb, distorts his face, deprives him of his reason, and dulls his sense of duty.

'Pāruṣya, is sternness or the total negation of mildness. Railing at or taunting another and speaking bitter words to anyone constitute harshness of speech; even so want of humility is sternness of body and the spirit of revenge and the feeling of hard-heartedness as opposed to forbearance and compassion represent sternness of mind.

'Ajñāna, or ignorance here means lack of correct knowledge about truth and untruth, virtue and sin etc., or forming a wrong notion about them.

Those unbelievers who are ungodly and deny His existence are called Asuras; and the evil propensities and immoral practices that are found to exist in them are known as the demoniac properties or 'Āsurī Sampad' as the Lord chooses to call them.

Describing thus the marks of those who are endowed with the divine and the demoniac gift respectively, the Lord now tells us the fruit of the two and cheers Arjuna by declaring him as born with the divine virtues.

दैवी सम्पद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता।
मा शुचः सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव॥५॥

दैवी सम्पत् the divine gift; विमोक्षाय as conducive to liberation; आसुरी (and) the demoniac gift; निबन्धाय as conducive to bondage; मता has been recognized; पाण्डव O son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; मा शुचः (therefore) grieve not; दैवीम् सम्पदम् the divine endowment; अभिजातः असि you are born with.

The divine gift has been recognized as conducive to liberation, and the demoniac gift as conducive to bondage; Grieve not, Arjuna; for you are born with the divine endowment. (5)

The divine gift as consisting of the Sāttvika virtues and practices enumerated in verses 1 to 3 above secures absolute and lasting freedom from the bondage of mundane

existence and unites one with God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, solidified. Such is the opinion of the Vedas and other sacred books, as well as of holy men. This is what is meant by the statement that the divine gift has been recognized as conducive to liberation.

Even so the demoniac gift briefly mentioned in verse 4 above—as consisting of evil propensities and immoral practices, which have the element of Tamas with an admixture Rajas preponderating in them, involves man in the trammels of worldly existence and leads to his downfall. The Vedas and other scriptures as well as holy men bear testimony to this fact. This is what is meant by the declaration that the demoniac gift has been recognized as conducive to bondage.

The latter half of this verse is intended to inspirit Arjuna by assuring him that he was naturally endowed with all the virtues constituting the divine gift. And since the latter brings about freedom from the bondage of worldly existence, there could be no doubt about his attaining blessedness. Hence he had no reason to grieve for.

The divine gift has been dealt with at length at the beginning of this chapter as well as before, but the demoniac gift has been very briefly touched so far. The Lord, therefore, takes up the subject now in the order to discuss in detail the nature as well as the conduct and behaviour of men possessing a demoniac disposition.

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन्दैव आसुर एव च।
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु॥ ६॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; लोके अस्मिन् in this world; द्वौ भूतसर्गौ (there are) two types of created beings or men; एव only; दैवः (viz.) the one possessing a divine nature; च and; आसुरः the other possessing a demoniac disposition; दैवः (of these) the type possessing a divine nature; विस्तरशः in detail; प्रोक्तः has been dealt with; आसुरम् (about) the type possessing a demoniac disposition; मे from Me; शृणु (now) hear (in detail).

There are only two types of men in this world, Arjuna,—the one possessing a divine nature and the other possessing a demoniac disposition. Of these, the type possessing a divine nature has been dealt with at length; now hear in detail from Me about the type possessing demoniac disposition. (6)

'Sarga' means creation, and 'Bhūtasarga' signifies an order of created beings. 'Asmin loke' refers to the world of human beings and the present chapter discusses the characteristics of human beings; that is why 'Bhūtasargau' has been translated as two orders or types of human beings.

The use of the particle 'Eva', which restricts the number of the types of human beings to two only, is intended to convey that although there are many types of human beings, the two mentioned in the present verse are the chief among them, as other types are included in them.

Of the two types of human beings mentioned here, the one which is Sāttvika in character possesses a divine disposition; while the other, which is dominated by Tamas blended with Rajas, possesses a demoniac disposition. Men possessing a fiendish or delusive nature should be taken as included in the type possessing a demoniac disposition.

The nature, conduct and behaviour of

those possessing a divine disposition have been discussed at length in verses 1 to 3 of this chapter as well as in other chapters; but the nature, conduct and behaviour of those possessing a demoniac disposition have been touched only briefly. Therefore, the Lord now undertakes to describe them in detail in the following verses in order that they may be eschewed in toto. This is what sought to be conveyed in the latter half of this verse.

Thus inviting Arjuna to hear attentively the marks of those possessing a demoniac disposition, the Lord now proceeds to describe them.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते॥७॥

आसुराः possessing a demoniac disposition; जनाः men; प्रवृत्तिम् right activity; च and; निवृत्तिम् right abstinence from activity; च even; न not; विदुः know; तेषु in them; न neither; शौचम् purity (internal or external); न nor; आचारः (good) conduct; च न nor; सत्यम् truthfulness; अपि even; विद्यते there is.

Men possessing a demoniac disposition know not what is right activity and what is right abstinence from activity. Hence they possess neither purity (external or internal) nor good conduct nor even truthfulness. (7)

Such action alone is worth performing or binding upon man as is conducive to his true well-being here as well as hereafter. Man should undertake such action only. And such action as is attended with evil consequences is worth eschewing and one should abstain from that. The first half of this verse is intended to convey that those possessing a demoniac disposition never realize that they should undertake only such actions as are worth undertaking and should abstain from those which are worth eschewing; hence they are guided in their activities by their own whims or caprices.

'Śauca' signifies external as well as internal purity, which has been discussed at length in the commentary on XIII.7; 'Ācāra' comprises such noble activities as form an inseparable part of such purity; and 'Satya' consists in speaking words which are sincere, wholesome and true, as has been shown in the commentary on verse 2 of this very chapter. Men possessing a demoniac disposition have none of these virtues; on the other hand, their life is marred by impurity, immorality and mendacity.

Thus showing lack of discrimination, purity and good conduct etc., in those possessing a demoniac disposition, the Lord now describes their atheistic outlook.

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम्।
अपरस्परसम्भूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम्॥८॥

ते these people (men possessing a demoniac disposition); आहुः say; जगत् the world; अप्रतिष्ठम् (is) without any foundation; असत्यम् having no reality, absolutely unreal; अनीश्वरम् (and) godless; अपरस्परसम्भूतम् brought forth by mutual union (of the male and female); कामहैतुकम् (therefore) conceived in lust; अन्यत् किम् what else (than this).

Men possessing a demoniac disposition say this world is without any foundation,

absolutely unreal and godless, brought forth by mutual union of the male and female and hence conceived in lust; what else than this ? (8)

The present verse represents the arbitrary and fanciful ideas of those who possess a demoniac disposition. They believe that this universe, consisting of animate and inanimate creation, has no basis in the shape of God or the moral law nor has it any abiding reality. That is to say, no living being had any existence prior to its birth nor does a creature have any life after death, nor does it have any creator, controller or ruler like God; it has been brought forth by mutual union of the male and female and it has no other object to fulfil except the gratification of carnal desires.

This naturally tempts one to enquire the nature and conduct of those who hold such atheistic views. Anticipating this query the Lord now describes the distinctive traits of such unbelievers in the following four verses.

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः।
प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः॥ ९॥

एताम् this; **दृष्टिम्** (false) view; **अवष्टभ्य** clinging to; **नष्टात्मानः** those who have lost their self; **अल्पबुद्धयः** slow-witted; **अहिताः** foes (of all); **उग्रकर्माणः** of terrible deeds; **जगतः क्षयाय** to the destruction of the universe; **प्रभवन्ति** prove equal.

Clinging to this false view these slow-witted men of a vile disposition and terrible deeds, these enemies of mankind; prove equal only to the destruction of the universe. (9)

The activities of these men of a demoniac disposition are all governed by the atheistic outlook mentioned above; this is what is meant by the words 'Etāṁ dṛṣṭiṁ avaṣṭabhya.'

These men of atheistic persuasions deny the existence of the soul; they are body-centred or materialists. Hence their nature gets debased, they never feel inclined to perform any virtuous deed. All their resolves are made with an eye to sensuous enjoyment. Their mind is ever busy hatching evil designs against others; in this way they harm themselves too. And they habitually perform with their mind, speech and body gruesome deeds that tend to intimidate, oppress and exterminate the animate and inanimate creation.

Again, whatever these people do with their intellect, mind, speech or body during their lifetime is solely intended to torment or obliterate the entire creation consisting of animate and inanimate beings. This is what is meant by the statement that they are only capable of bringing ruination to the world.

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः।
मोहाद्गृहीत्वासद्ग्राहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचिव्रताः॥ १०॥

दम्भमानमदान्विताः (men) full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance; **दुष्पूरम्** insatiable; **कामम्** longing; **आश्रित्य** cherishing; **मोहात्** through ignorance; **असद्ग्राहान्** false doctrines; **गृहीत्वा** embracing; **अशुचिव्रताः** men of impure conduct; **प्रवर्तन्ते** move (in this world).

Cherishing insatiable desires and embracing false doctrines through ignorance, these men of impure conduct move in this world, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. (10)

'Dambha' or hypocrisy consists in assuming according to the needs of the occasion an appearance which gives one an air of superiority, in order to achieve one's selfish ends in the shape of honour, wealth, adoration and prestige etc. 'Māna' or pride consists in regarding oneself as worthy of honour or adoration; and 'Mada' or arrogance is the same as remaining intoxicated with the pride of one's fine person, merit, birth, power, learning, rank, wealth and progeny etc. All these evils are present in men of a demoniac disposition; hence they have been spoken of as 'Dambhamāna madānvitāḥ'.

The 'Kāma' or desire to acquire the various enjoyments of the world can never be satisfied; hence It has been characterized as 'Duṣpūram' or insatiable. And entertaining in one's mind a firm resolve to satisfy this longing is what is meant by cherishing such a longing.

Evolving heretic doctrines of various kinds they remain obstinately clinging to them. This is what is meant by their embracing false doctrines.

'Aśucivratāḥ' means that their diet, their mode of living, their manner of talking, their trade and commerce, their monetary transactions and their social dealings and behaviour, all are dirty and governed by heterodox principles.

The verb 'Pravartante' shows that these people are guided in their behaviour by their own whims or caprices.

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः।
कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः॥ ११॥

च and; प्रलयान्ताम् ending (only) with death; अपरिमेयाम् innumerable; चिन्ताम् cares; उपाश्रिताः giving themselves up to; कामोपभोगपरमाः devoted to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures; एतावत् this much (is joy); इति so; निश्चिताः (are) positive in their belief.

Giving themselves up to innumerable cares ending only with death, they remain devoted to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures and are positive in their belief that this is the highest limit of joy. (11)

The cares with which these people are engrossed are so limitless that they can neither be numbered nor can their extent be gauged. They do not cease till a whole lifetime is over and persist till the last moment. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

The accumulation and enjoyment of luxuries of various kinds is the sole aim of their existence. Their life is thus wholly directed towards the realization of this end and they are fully convinced that the enjoyment of sensuous pleasure is the only joy worth the same. This is the idea brought out in the latter half of this verse.

आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः।
ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान्॥ १२॥

आशापाशशतैः by a hundred ties of expectation; बद्धाः held in bondage;

कामक्रोधपरायणाः wholly giving themselves up to lust and anger; कामभोगार्थम् for the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures; अन्यायेन by unfair means; अर्थसञ्चयान् hoards of money and other objects; ईहन्ते strive (to obtain).

Held in bondage by hundreds of ties of expectation and wholly giving themselves up to lust and anger, they strive to amass by unfair means hoards of money and other objects for the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures. (12)

The mind of men possessing a demoniac disposition revels in various projects of sense-gratification and they cherish innumerable hopes of various kinds to see those projects materialize. Their mind is now tossed by the hope of this enjoyment, the very next moment it feels drawn towards another and clings to a third at another moment; in this way they are never free from the shackles of hope. This is what is meant by the phrase 'Āśāpāśaśataiḥ baddhāḥ'.

For the realization of these hopes they never depend on God or any other deity, noble act or pious thought, but take recourse to lust and anger alone. Hence they have been spoken of as wholly given up to lust and anger.

He who attempts to usurp others' possessions etc., by taking recourse to such unlawful or unauthorized means as thieving, robbery, dacoity, lying, chicanery, duplicity, hypocrisy, violence, diplomacy, gambling, fraudulence, poisoning, false accusation and intimidation etc. under the prompting of lust and anger, is said to strive for the accumulation of wealth by unfair means.

Having discussed in the preceding four verses the distinctive marks and conduct of men possessing a demoniac disposition, the Lord now proceeds to describe in the following four verses their resolves, which are prompted by delusion and the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as their evil destiny.

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम्।
इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम्॥ १३॥

मया by me; अद्य today; इदम् this; लब्धम् has been secured; इमम् (and) this; मनोरथम् ambition; प्राप्स्ये shall (now) realize; मे with me; इदम् this (much); धनम् wealth; अस्ति is (already); पुनः अपि (and) yet again; इदम् this; भविष्यति shall be.

They say to themselves, "This much has been secured by me today and now I shall realize this ambition. So much wealth is already with me and yet again this shall be mine. (13)

The word 'Manoratha' in this verse stands for the thought of wife, progeny, wealth, land, house, honour, fame and all other objects that are sought for by the mind. The present verse is, therefore, intended to convey that men possessing a demoniac disposition indulge in egotistic thoughts of various kinds. They attribute their success in attaining the object of their desire in the past to their personal endeavour and also look to the same for their success in realizing further objects of their desire. They are conscious of the fact that they are already masters of a considerable fortune and power and confidently hope to have more not long afterwards.

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि।
ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी॥ १४॥

असौ that; शत्रुः enemy; मया by me; हतः has been killed; च and; अपरान् (those) others; अपि too; अहम् I; हनिष्ये shall kill; अहम् I (am); ईश्वरः the lord (of all); भोगी the enjoyer (of all power); अहम् I (am); सिद्धः endowed with all occult powers; बलवान् (and am) mighty; सुखी (and) happy.

That enemy has been slain by me and I shall kill those others too. I am the Lord of all, the enjoyer of all power; I am endowed with all supernatural powers, and am mighty and happy. (14)

Men of a demoniac disposition, who regard the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures as the *summum bonum* of life, are slaves of lust and anger. They have no faith in God, religion or the law of recompense. Therefore, intoxicated with pride they feel that there was none in this world who could stand in their way or oppose them with impunity. Therefore, boiling with rage, they haughtily brag in a stern voice that such and such a man, who was so mighty and such a world-renowned and influential personality, was despatched by them in no time because he stood on inimical terms with them; nay, others too, who are at loggerheads with them or will be inimically disposed towards them shall be easily killed by them, however powerful they may be. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

Besides being egotistic, these people are intoxicated with pride as well. They feel that no one in this world is greater than they, that they can kill or protect, uproot or establish, whomsoever they like. Hence with great pride they say, 'Oh, we are absolutely free, everything lies in our own hands; who else than us is powerful, we are the masters of all fortune. Nay, we are the Lord of all lords, the supreme Person too. Every one should worship us. We are not only the masters of fortune, we also enjoy it. We have never met with failure in our life; to whatever task we have set ourselves, our efforts have invariably been crowned with success. Our life has been ever successful; nay, we are endowed with a prophetic vision, future events become known to us beforehand. We know everything, nothing is hidden from us. Nay, we are supremely powerful; our mental or physical strength is so great that anyone who depends on it will be able to conquer the world through it. Due to all these reasons we are very happy; all worldly joys are ever at our service and will continue to serve us." That is the idea brought out in the latter half of this verse.

आढ्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया।
यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः॥ १५॥
अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः।
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ॥ १६॥

आढ्यः wealthy; अभिजनवान् having a big family; अस्मि I am; मया सदृशः like unto me; अन्यः कः who else; अस्ति is; यक्ष्ये I will sacrifice (to gods); दास्यामि I will give (alms); मोदिष्ये I will make merry; इति thus; अज्ञानविमोहिताः blinded by ignorance; अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ताः with their minds

bewildered by numerous thoughts; मोहजालसमावृताः enveloped in the mesh of delusion; कामभोगेषु to the enjoyments of sensuous pleasures; प्रसक्ताः addicted; अशुचौ नरके into the foulest hell; पतन्ति they fall.

I am wealthy and own a large family; who else is like unto me ? I will sacrifice to gods, I will give alms, I will make merry. Thus blinded by ignorance, enveloped in the mesh of delusion and addicted to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures, their mind bewildered by numerous thoughts, these men of a devilish disposition fall into the foulest hell. (15-16)

The first half of the fifteenth verse shows how these men of a demoniac disposition boast of their wealth and big family. These people boastfully declare that there is no limit to their wealth, their kinsmen and relatives, their friends and associates, their followers and companions. At a single call from them countless men are ready to follow them. In this way none can match them in wealth and man-power.

The verbs 'Yakṣye' and 'Dāsyāmi' give expression to their false pride relating to the performance of sacrifices and charity. The idea is that men possessing a demoniac disposition never perform nor seek to perform the Sāttvika type of sacrifices; likewise they never practise nor seek to practise the Sāttvika form of charity. They make an external show of sacrifices and charity simply in order to create an impression on others and boastfully declare that none can vie with them in the performance of sacrifices and charity.

The verb 'Modiṣye' gives expression to their false pride relating to merriment. Indulging in boasts of various kinds they proudly picture to their mind the delight that will be theirs, how they will be transported with joy and enjoy life to their heart's content.

The ignorance with which they are said to be blinded is no other than the egotism revealed in verses 13—14 above as well as in the present verses.

The compound adjective 'Anekacitta vibhrāntāḥ' shows that men possessing a demoniac disposition are unable to fasten their attention on any one object, they are fickle minded.

'Kāmabhogeṣu Prasaktāḥ' shows that such men look upon the gratification of the senses as the sole object of their existence; that is responsible for their excessive attachment to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures.

The Words 'Aśucau Narake Patanti' describe the evil destiny of men possessing a demoniac disposition. The idea is that men of this type perpetrate sins of various kinds for the gratification of their senses and are condemned to frightful hells of various appellations, which are full of suffering and abound in obnoxious substances such as faeces, urine, blood, pus and so on.

In verse 15 above it was stated that men possessing a demoniac disposition vauntingly proclaim their intention to 'perform sacrifices'; the Lord accordingly reveals the nature of their sacrificial performances in the following verse.

आत्मसम्भाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।
यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ १७ ॥

ते those; आत्मसम्भाविताः self-conceited; स्तब्धाः haughty; धनमानमदान्विताः intoxicated by wealth and honour; नामयज्ञैः through nominal sacrifices; दम्भेन for ostentation; अविधिपूर्वकम्

without following the sacred rituals; यजन्ते worship (God).

Intoxicated by wealth and honour, those self-conceited and haughty men worship God through nominal sacrifices for ostentation without following the sacred rituals. (17)

'Ātmasambhāvitāḥ' are those who are in their own estimation superior to all in every respect, honourable, noble and worthy of adoration.

Similarly 'Stabdhāḥ' are those who are too arrogant to behave politely with anybody, not even with those who are worthy of their adoration.

The sacrifices they perform are merely nominal and devoid of faith and are only intended to impress others. They are thus *Tāmasika* in character and that is why they lead to hell; for the Lord says in Chapter XIV above that men of a *Tāmasika* disposition fall into hell. For a detailed exposition of what is called 'Tāmasa Yajña' the reader is referred to XVII.13.

Describing thus the nature of their sacrificial performances, the Lord now delineates their own disposition, which is responsible for their evil fate.

अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः।
मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः॥१८॥

अहङ्कारम् egotism; बलम् brute force; दर्पम् arrogance; कामम् lust; च and; क्रोधम् anger etc.; संश्रिताः given over to; अभ्यसूयकाः calumniating others; आत्मपरदेहेषु (dwelling) in their own body as well as in those of others; माम् Me (the inner controller of all); प्रद्विषन्तः hating.

Given over to egotism, brute force, arrogance, lust and anger etc. and calumniating others, they hate Me (the inner controller of all) dwelling in their own bodies as well as in those of others. (18)

Full of egotism, these men possessing a demoniac disposition proclaim themselves as the lord of all, the enjoyer of all luxuries, accomplished in every way, mighty and happy. Nothing is impossible in their eyes. Resorting to brute force, they antagonize others and proceed to intimidate, assault and involve them into trouble. They consider none as a match for their might. Full of arrogance they boast of their big fortune and large family. They recognize none as their equal. Given over to lust, they indulge in immoral acts of various kinds. And obsessed by anger they threaten to kill whosoever acts in opposition to their will or dares to offend them. Abandoning themselves in this way to egotism etc., they indulge in dreams and idle talks of various kinds; and whatever they do is prompted and backed by all these evil propensities. They never take their stand on God, religion or sacred lore. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

The use of the conjunctive particle 'Ca' is intended to cover many more evils besides those explicitly mentioned in the verse, viz., hypocrisy, greed, infatuation and so on.

'Asūyā' consists in discovering and condemning the faults of others, repudiating their virtues and painting them as a vice. Men possessing a demoniac disposition are habituated to this. To say nothing of others, they cavil even at God and holy men. This is what is sought to be conveyed by adding

the prefix 'Abhi' before 'Asūyakāḥ', which shows that none escapes their censorious eye.

In the latter half of this verse the Lord shows that men of a demoniac disposition, who antagonize others and seek to oppress them in various ways and also suffer themselves, thereby bear malice to Him, inasmuch as He dwells in them as well as in others as their inner controller. To antagonize or hate another, to harm another and to inflict suffering on another is to hate God Himself dwelling in one's own body as well as in those of others.

Thus describing in verses 7 to 18 the evil propensities and immoral practices etc., of those possessing a demoniac disposition, the Lord now condemns such people in strongest terms and describes their evil fate in the following two verses just in order to evoke a feeling of repugnance towards those evil traits and practices.

तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान्संसारेषु नराधमान्।
क्षिपाम्यजस्त्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु॥ १९॥

तान् those; द्विषतः hating; अशुभान् sinful; क्रूरान् (and) cruel; नराधमान् vilest among men; अहम् I; संसारेषु in the world; अजस्त्रम् repeatedly; आसुरीषु योनिषु into demoniacal wombs; एव only; क्षिपामि cast.

These haters, sinful, cruel and vilest among men, I cast again and again into demoniacal wombs in this world. (19)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Tān', qualified by the adjectives 'Dviṣataḥ' 'Aśubhān', 'Krūrān' and 'Narādhamān', refers to men possessing a demoniac disposition who have been spoken of at length in the foregoing verses. Their vile propensities and immoral practices alone are responsible for their evil destiny: this is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the above qualifications. The idea is that these vile men bear malice to all, bring corruption into society by their sinful activities of various kinds perpetrate many cruel acts in a callous manner, and harm others without any provocation.

'Demoniac wombs' represent all subhuman species of living beings such as the lion, the tiger, beasts, birds, insects and moths, reptiles, scorpions, dogs, crows and all other.

'Ajasram' implies that they are cast into such demoniac wombs times without number; while the use of the indeclinable 'Eva' with 'Āsurīṣu Yoniṣu' rules out the possibility of their being born in higher species such as gods, manes or human beings.

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि।
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम्॥ २०॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; मूढाः those stupid souls; माम् Me; अप्राप्य not reaching; जन्मनि जन्मनि life after life; आसुरीम् योनिम् demoniac wombs; आपन्नाः attain; ततः (even) in comparison to them; अधमाम् गतिम् to a still lower plane; एव indeed; यान्ति sink down.

Failing to reach Me, Arjuna, these stupid souls are born life after life in demoniac wombs and then verily sink down to a still lower plane. (20)

Even though it is out of the question for such stupid souls possessing a demoniac nature to attain to a higher plane of spiritual existence to say nothing of God-realization,—the human soul is eligible for this consummation. Having earned this title, men who lose sight of it and embrace the demoniac nature abandoning the path leading to God-realization in the shape of a divine disposition, are debarred from God-realization even after attaining the golden opportunity of a human birth. This is what is implied by the words 'Mām' Aprāpya'. The all-merciful Lord takes pity as it were on this plight of the human soul and thereby warns him not to forfeit the title to God-realization, which is a birthright with him, by embracing a demoniac disposition.

Men of this type are cast into demoniac wombs time without number and never attain a higher birth. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

The words 'Tato Yānti' Adhamāṁ Gatim' are intended to convey that there is no end to the misery of such stupid souls. Repeated birth in demoniac wombs does not purge them of their sins and they fall into frightful hells such as Kumbhīpāka, Mahāraurava, Tāmisra and Aṅdhatāmisra etc., which are full of untold suffering and represent a still lower condition of being.

The declaration of the Lord that men of a devilish disposition are repeatedly born in demoniac wombs and are hurled into frightful hells may lead one to enquire as to how they can escape this evil fate and attain the supreme goal. The Lord, therefore, exhorts us to give up the three evils forming part of the demoniac nature, which are mainly responsible for all evil destinies, and points out the way to attain the supreme goal.

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत्॥ २१॥

कामः desire; क्रोधः anger; तथा and; लोभः greed; इदम् this; त्रिविधिम् triple; नरकस्य द्वारम् gate of hell; आत्मनः of the soul; नाशनम् bringing about the ruination; तस्मात् therefore; एतत् त्रयम् all these three; त्यजेत् one should avoid.

Desire, anger and greed—this triple gate of hell brings about the ruination of the soul. Therefore, one should, avoid all these three. (21)

The craving for objects of enjoyment such as wife and children is known as 'Kāma'; it is under the impulse of desire that men commit sins of various kinds, such as thieving, adultery and partaking of prohibited food. The excitement caused by the frustration of one's plans is called 'Krodha'; obsessed by anger, men resort to violence, retaliation and other sinful acts of varying description. A passionate longing for wealth and other possessions is known by the name of 'Lobha'. Avaricious men refuse to part with their money on appropriate occasions and remain engaged in acquiring and accumulating wealth even by unfair means. This involves them into sins of a major type such as lying, duplicity, thieving and perfidy etc. Sins lead to the attainment of hells like Tāmisra, Aṅdhatāmisra and so on; that is why these three evils have been spoken of as gates of hell.

The word 'Ātmanaḥ' stands for the Jīvātmā or embodied soul. The soul, however, never perishes; hence the destruction of the

soul referred to in this verse should be taken to mean its ruination or degradation. Ever since man falls a prey to desire, anger and greed, the standard of his thoughts, feelings and conduct begins to deteriorate. Desire, anger and greed drive him to actions which ruin his body, fill his mind with evil thoughts, impair his reason, and vitiate all his activities, with the result that his life here is robbed of its joy, peace and purity and is transformed into a vale of tears, and he is cast into demoniac wombs and hells hereafter. That is why these three evils have been declared as responsible for the ruination of the soul.

When it is settled that desire, anger and greed, which are born of ignorance and are the root of all evils, are solely responsible for degradation in every form, it behoves us to eschew them altogether without delay regarding them as no less injurious than a deadly poison. This is what is meant by the words 'Tasmādetattrayaṁ Tyajet' occurring at the end of the verse.

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः।
आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम्॥ २२॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; **एतैः त्रिभिः तमोद्वारैः** from these three gates of hell; **विमुक्तः** freed; **नरः** man; **आत्मनः** his own; **श्रेयः** salvation; **आचरति** works; **ततः** thereby; **पराम् गतिम्** the supreme goal; **याति** attains.

Freed from these three gates of hell, man works his own salvation and thereby attains the supreme goal i.e., God. (22)

The compound word 'Tamodvāraiḥ', qualified by the adjectives 'Etaiḥ' and 'Tribhiḥ', refers to desire, anger and greed which have been spoken of in the preceding verse as the three gates of hell. Hells like Tāmisra and Aṅdhatāmisra are full of darkness; they are attained as a result of vices and evil propensities which are born of the darkness of ignorance; and creatures inhabiting those regions are ever enveloped in the darkness of woe and ignorance. Hence they are spoken of as Tamas or darkness. Desire, anger and greed—these three pave the way for these regions; hence they have been referred to as 'Tamodvāraiḥ'. He alone who is altogether free from these can strive for his spiritual uplift. And having attained a human body, he alone who works his own salvation in this way is 'man' (Naraḥ) in the real acceptation of the term. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the word 'Naraḥ' in this context.

Men who are slaves of desire, anger and greed bring about their own degradation; while those who are free from these strive for their salvation. Therefore, having given up desire, anger and greed, those who cultivate in a disinterested spirit divine properties in the shape of moral virtues and good conduct as prescribed in the Śāstras are said to work for their salvation.

One may ask here: He who acts according to his own belief rather than practise divine virtues, does he attain the supreme goal or not ? Anticipating this query the Lord says:—

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम्॥ २३॥

यः who; शास्त्रविधिम् the injunctions of the scriptures; उत्सृज्य having cast aside; कामकारतः according to his own sweet will; वर्तते acts (arbitrarily); सः he; न neither; सिद्धिम् perfection; अवाप्नोति attains; न nor; पराम् गतिम् the supreme goal; न nor again; सुखम् happiness.

Having cast aside the injunctions of the scriptures, he who acts in an arbitrary way according to his own sweet will neither attains perfection nor the supreme goal nor even happiness. (23)

The word 'Śāstras' covers the Vedas as well as the whole body of sacred literature based on the Vedas, viz., the Smṛtis, the Purāṇas and the Epics (the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*). It is from these scriptures or sacred books that we learn how to renounce the practices and behaviour representing the demoniac properties and to cultivate auspicious qualities and conduct forming part of the divine endowment. Flouting the injunctions of these Śāstras, which throw light on what one ought to do and what one should abstain from doing, he who is guided by his own reason and is prompted by the desire to win honour, fame and prestige etc., is said to act in an arbitrary way.

The acts of him who casts aside the injunctions of the scriptures lead to his downfall in case they are positively prohibited by the Śāstras, i.e., of a sinful character. Hence they are out of consideration here. If, on the other hand, his acts are prompted by some desire, even though approved by his own reason, they bring no reward to the doer inasmuch as they are performed in an arbitrary way and flout the injunctions of the scriptures. That is to say, far from reaching the supreme goal, he is not even able to acquire occult powers such as the ability to assume an atomic form or attain perfection in the form of paradise, nor does he enjoy the Sāttvika type of happiness in this world.

The declaration made by the Lord that arbitrary acts flouting the injunctions of the Śāstras yield no fruit, may lead one to enquire as to what should be done under the circumstances. Anticipating this query the Lord says:—

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि॥ २४॥

तस्मात् therefore; ते for you; इह कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ in this matter of determining what should be done and what should not be done; शास्त्रम् the scripture (alone); प्रमाणम् is (your) authority; ज्ञात्वा knowing (this); शास्त्रविधानोक्तम् ordained by the scriptures; कर्म action; कर्तुम् अर्हसि you ought to perform.

Therefore, the scripture alone is your guide in determining what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing this, you ought to perform only such action as is ordained by the scriptures. (24)

The Vedas and other scriptures based on them, viz.,, the Smṛtis, the Purāṇas and the Epics, guide us in determining what one should do and what one should abstain from doing; therefore, one should accept the authority of the Śāstras in such matters rather than act in an arbitrary way. That is to say, one should perform only such acts as are ordained by the scriptures, and abstain from those which are prohibited by them.

This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

Recognizing in this way the authority of the scriptures, Arjuna is advised in the latter half of this verse to perform in the right way duties of an obligatory nature prescribed in the Śāstras, and no such actions as are prohibited by them. And such virtuous acts too as are sanctioned by the scriptures should be performed only in a disinterested spirit, for only those acts that are performed in a disinterested spirit have been declared in the Śāstras as conducive to God-realization.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे दैवासुरसम्पद्विभागयोगो नाम
षोडशोऽध्याय: ॥ १६ ॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the sixteenth chapter entitled "The Yoga of Division between the Divine and the Demoniacal Properties."

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter XVII

At the beginning of this chapter Arjuna enquires about the position of those who are endowed with faith. In reply to this question the Lord classifies faith into three types and points out that it is faith which determines the character of a man. Thereafter, showing the connection of faith with worship, sacrifice, austerity etc., He proclaims in the concluding verse that the actions of those who are devoid of faith are as good as not done. Since the three types of faith have thus been separately expounded in this chapter, it has been given the appellation of Śraddhātrayavibhāgayoga or the "Yoga of division of three kinds of faith."

Title of the Chapter

In the opening verse of this chapter Arjuna enquires of the Lord about the position of those who having cast aside the injunctions of the Śāstras, worship God with faith. In reply to this question the Lord discusses in the second verse the three types of innate faith varying according to the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti; the third declares that the character of a man is determined by his faith; the fourth tells us how men possessing the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika types of faith worship gods, demigods, devils and spirits respectively; the fifth and sixth decry those who practise austere penance not sanctioned by the scriptures; the seventh calls upon Arjuna to hear the different types of food, sacrifice, penance and gift, the eighth, ninth and tenth discuss the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika types of food; the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth similarly discuss the characteristics of the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika types of sacrifice. Describing in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth the nature of bodily austerity, austerity of speech and austerity of the mind respectively, the Lord defines the Sāttvika form of austerity in the seventeenth, and the Rājasika and Tāmasika forms in the eighteenth and nineteenth. The twentieth, twenty-first and twenty-second elucidate the distinctive features of the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika forms of charity. The twenty-third glorifies the sacred words "OM TAT SAT." The twenty-fourth explains the use of the syllable "OM", the twenty-fifth that of "TAT" and the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh that of "SAT". And the chapter is concluded by proclaiming in the last or twenty-eighth verse that sacrifice, charity, austerity and other acts performed without faith, bring no reward here or hereafter and are as good as not done at all.

Summary of the Chapter

At the beginning of Chapter XVI the Lord first of all described under the name of "divine endowment" the virtues and conduct prescribed in the Śāstras and practised in a disinterested spirit, and then discussed the demoniac properties which are discountenanced by the Śāstras. At the same time He affirmed His law of casting into hell men possessing a demoniac disposition and proclaimed that lust, anger and greed are the main evils forming part of

Link of the Discourse

the demoniac properties and are gates of hell; renouncing these he who strives for his spiritual welfare attains the supreme goal. Thereafter He declared that having cast aside the scriptural injunctions, he who acts in an arbitrary way and does only that which is approved by his own judgment gets no reward for his actions; his efforts aiming at perfection bring him no perfection, his endeavours aiming at happiness fail to bring him happiness and attainment of the supreme goal is quite out of the question for him. Arjuna was, therefore, advised to follow in a disinterested spirit the injunctions of the Śāstras, which are competent to determine what should be done and what should not be done. While conceding that the actions of those who act in an arbitrary way flouting the scriptural injunctions yield no fruit at all. Arjuna is, however, reminded of those who reverently perform sacred acts such as worship, sacrifice and so on, even though casting aside the injunctions of the scriptures through ignorance or otherwise, and is eager to know where they stand. Giving expression to this curiosity of his, Arjuna puts the following question to the Lord:—

अर्जुन उवाच

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः।
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः॥ १॥

कृष्ण O Kṛṣṇa; ये who; शास्त्रविधिम् the injunctions of the scriptures; उत्सृज्य having cast aside; श्रद्धया with faith; अन्विताः endowed; यजन्ते worship (gods and others); तेषाम् their; निष्ठा position; तु then; का (is) what; सत्त्वम् partaking of the nature of Sattva; आहो or; रजः partaking of the nature of Rajas; तमः (or) partaking of the nature of Tamas.

Arjuna said: Those who, endowed with faith, worship gods and others casting aside the injunctions of the scriptures, where do they stand, Kṛṣṇa,—in Sattva, Rajas or Tamas ? (1)

Even though the men referred to in the present verse stand on the same footing as the one mentioned in verse 23 of Chapter XVI in so far as both these types of men cast aside the scriptural injunctions, their cases no doubt differ. Verse 23 of Chapter XVI speaks of him who disdainfully flouts the injunctions of the Śāstras; while the present verse refers to those who disregard them through ignorance or want of knowledge. The former has no regard for the Śāstras; he does only that which is approved by his own judgment. That is why he is said to act in an arbitrary way according to his own sweet will— (वर्तते कामकारतः). Those referred to in the present verse, however, are said to worship gods and others with faith (यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः); thus faith or reverence is present in them. Where there is faith, contemptuous disregard is out of the question. Knowledge of the scriptural injunctions is denied to them due to adverse circumstances and unfavourable surroundings, for want of leisure or through lack of industry and study etc.; and it is this ignorance which is responsible for their failure to respect the injunctions of the Śāstras.

The word 'Niṣṭhā' in this verse stands for one's state or condition of being. For while answering the query of Arjuna contained in this verse, the Lord says in verse 3 below that faith constitutes the very being of man; whatever the nature of his faith, that verily he is. That is to say, his condition of being corresponds to the nature of his faith. This state or condition of one's being is known

by the name 'Niṣṭhā'.

In verse 6 of Chapter XVI the Lord referred to two types of men, viz., those blessed with a divine nature and those possessing a demoniac disposition. Of these, the former perform actions enjoined by the scriptures in a disinterested spirit, and thereby attain liberation. Those possessing a demoniac disposition, again, are either Tāmasika men who perpetrate sinful acts, or those who are dominated by Rajas blended with Tamas and perform noble deeds of their own liking, ignoring the scriptural injunctions. The former are born in sub-human species or cast into hells, while the latter get no reward for their noble actions. They have none the less to reap the evil consequences of their sinful deeds. While all these facts relating to those who possess a divine or demoniac disposition were thoroughly understood by Arjuna, he had some doubts about those who worship gods and others with faith, though casting aside the scriptural injunctions for want of knowledge about them. It was not clear to him whether they should be recognized as possessing a divine nature or a demoniac disposition. This is what he seeks to know by asking the question embodied in the latter half of this verse.

From the above exposition it is clear that men of this world can be classified under the following five heads:—

(1) Those who not only follow the injunctions of the Śāstras but are endowed with faith as well;

(2) Those who are lacking in faith even though they respect the scriptural injunctions to some extent;

(3) Those who, though endowed with faith, are yet unable to follow the injunctions of the Śāstras;

(4) Those who are neither endowed with faith nor respect the scriptural injunctions; and

(5) Those who flout the scriptural injunctions in a disdainful spirit.

Now the question is, how to distinguish men belonging to each of these five groups, what is their destiny and in which particular verses of the Gītā do they find mention.

(1) In this connection it may be submitted that men belonging to the first category, viz., those who are not only endowed with faith but also follow the injunctions of the Śāstras, are again of two kinds; (i) those who perform their duties in a disinterested spirit, and (ii) those who work with an interested motive. Those Sāttvika men who are blessed with the divine endowment and act in a disinterested spirit attain liberation; they are mainly referred to in the first three verses of Chapter XVI as well as in verses 11,14,17, and 20 of the present chapter. Those who are dominated by Rajas blended with Sattva and work with an interested motive attain supernatural powers, happiness and higher worlds such as heaven etc.; these find mention in verses 42 to 44 of Chapter II, verse 12 of Chapter IV, verses 20 to 22 of Chapter VII and verses 20,21 and 23 of Chapter IX.

(2) Those who are lacking in faith even though they perform sacrifices and other acts and practise charity and austerity etc., following to a certain extent the injunctions of the Śāstras, get no reward for those acts, which go in vain and are of no use to them here or hereafter. These have been mentioned in verse 28 of the present chapter.

(3) Those who, though casting aside the injunctions of the Śāstras through ignorance, are yet endowed with faith are either Sāttvika or Rājasika or Tāmasika in character according to the nature of their faith. Their destiny too corresponds to their nature. These have been referred to in verses 2,3 and 4 of this chapter.

(4) Those men of a demoniac disposition

who neither believe in the scriptures nor possess faith and who, therefore, lead a sinful life acting on the impulse of lust, anger and greed are cast into hells or born in the lower species. These find mention in verse 15 of Chapter VII, verse 12 of Chapter IX, verses 7 to 20 of Chapter XVI and verses 5,6 and 13 of this Chapter.

(5) Those who follow their own will and do whatever is approved by their own judgment, flouting the injunctions of the Śāstras in a disdainful spirit, are either Tāmasika men who perform acts which are forbidden by the scriptures, or such as are dominated by Rajas blended with Tamas and perform noble deeds. Of these, the former are condemned to hell and other evil fate and have been referred to in sub-para 4 above; whereas the latter get no reward whatsoever inasmuch as they set at naught the injunctions of the scriptures, as has been mentioned in verse 23 of Chapter XVI. Let it be noted in this connection that sinful acts perpetrated by these men invariably lead to evil consequences such as birth in a sub-human species and tortures in hell.

The references quoted above by way of authority are by no means exhaustive: there are other verses too dealing with these five types of men. We have, however, refrained from citing all of them in this context.

The Lord vouchsafes a brief reply to Arjuna's query in the following two verses:—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु॥ २॥

देहिनाम् of men; सा that; स्वभावजा innate (not based on the study of scriptures); श्रद्धा faith; सात्त्विकी of a Sāttvika character; च and; राजसी of a Rājasika type; च and; तामसी of a Tāmasika nature; इति in this way; त्रिविधा of three kinds; एव only; भवति is; ताम् of that; शृणु hear (from Me).

Śrī Bhagavān said: That untutored innate faith of men is of three kinds—Sāttvika and Rājasika and Tāmasika. Hear of it from Me. (2)

The word 'Dehinām' in this verse stands for the generality of men who naturally identify themselves with their body.

The word 'Śraddhā', qualified by the adjectives 'Sā' and 'Svabhāvajā', refers to the faith existing in men who perform sacrifices and other duties in a spirit of reverence, though casting aside the injunctions of the scriptures. Śraddhā which follows from a study of the scriptures is called 'Śāstrajā' (proceeding from study of the scriptures); while 'Śvabhāvajā' is that which is inborn and conforms to the tendencies formed as a result of one's actions in the current as well as in previous lives.

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत।
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः॥ ३॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; सर्वस्य of all (men); श्रद्धा faith; सत्त्वानुरूपा shaped to their mental constitution; भवति is; अयम् this; पुरुषः man; श्रद्धामयः (is) constituted of faith; यः who; यच्छ्रद्धः possessing the kind of faith he does; सः he (himself); सः (is) that; एव indeed.

The faith of all men conforms to their mental constitution, Arjuna. This man consists of faith; whatever the nature of his faith, he is verily that. (3)

The pronoun 'Sarvasya' stands for those very men who regard the body as their self and have been referred to as 'Dehinām' in the preceding verse. This shows that the verse speaks of the generality of men who are identified with their body. For the Lord says in the latter half of this very verse. 'Whatever the nature of faith man possesses, that verily he is.' This dictum can apply only to him who regards the body as his self, and not to the man of wisdom who has transcended the three Guṇas.

Man's nature conforms to the kind of actions he performs, which are either Sāttvika, Rājasika or Tāmasika. And nature is imbedded in the mind; hence his frame of mind is believed to reflect his nature. Hence to call one's faith inborn is just the same as to speak of it as conforming to one's mental constitution. Thus there is no anomaly on the part of the Lord in speaking of faith as 'Svabhāvajā' at one place and as 'Sattvānurūpā' at another.

The real being of the Puruṣa or soul is beyond the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti, as is stated in verse 22 of Chapter XIII. The present verse, however, speaks of the Puruṣa who is seated in Prakṛti and is connected with the three Guṇas born of Prakṛti. For diversity attributable to the Guṇas is possible only in the Puruṣa who is seated in Prakṛti. Diversity due to the Guṇas is out of the question in the case of him who is beyond the three Guṇas. Hence there is no contradiction in speaking of the soul as 'Paraḥ' (wholly beyond the three Guṇas) at one place and as 'Śraddhāmaya' at another. The Lord points out here that a man's state or condition of being corresponds to the nature of his faith, which is either Sāttvika, Rājasika or Tāmasika according to the frame of his mind. That is to say, the kind of faith a man possesses represents his very being. Establishing in this way the identity of faith, the state of being and the very being or self of man, the Lord answers the query of Arjuna relating to the state of being of those who worship with faith even though casting aside the injunctions of the Śāstras.

It has been stated above that a man's Niṣṭhā or state of being corresponds to his faith; this may lead one to enquire the means of ascertaining the state of being of a particular individual. Anticipating this query the Lord says:—

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः।
प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः॥ ४॥

सात्त्विकाः men of Sāttvika disposition; **देवान्** gods; **यजन्ते** worship; **राजसाः** men of Rājasika temperament; **यक्षरक्षांसि** Yakṣas (demigods) and demons; **अन्ये** others; **तामसाः जनाः** (viz.,) men of Tāmasika disposition; **प्रेतान्** the spirits of the dead; **च** and; **भूतगणान्** troops of ghosts; **यजन्ते** worship.

Men of Sāttvika disposition worship gods; those of Rājasika temperament worship demigods and demons; while others, who are men of Tāmasika disposition, worship the spirits of the dead and groups of ghosts. (4)

The general rule is that a man is judged by his conduct. Applying this test it can be safely assumed that the worshippers of gods, who possess Sāttvika

disposition, must have similar disposition; and according to the maxim that a worshipper bears affinity to the deity, it is stated here that the worshippers of gods are Sāttvika by nature—their Niṣṭhā is of Sāttvika type. The words 'Devān' in this verse should be taken to include the Sun-god, the moon-god, the god of fire, the wind-god, Indra (the lord of paradise), Varuṇa (the god of water), Yama (the god of judgment), the two Aśvinīkumāras (the twin-born physicians of gods), the Viśvedevas and other gods mentioned in the Śāstras.

Worship of gods being a Sāttvika pursuit, those who practise it have been declared as Sāttvika; but perfectly Sāttvika is he who takes to a Sāttvika pursuit in a disinterested spirit.

Just as the worshippers of gods are Sāttvika by the nature, it can likewise be presumed that the worshippers of Yakṣas and demons have Rājasika temperament while those of ghosts, spirits and devils are Tāmasika by nature.

The destiny of these worshippers varies according to the object of their worship. The worshippers of gods attain a celestial body; those of demigods and demons are reborn as demigods and demons; while the worshippers of ghosts and spirits attain the form, traits and condition etc., of ghosts and spirits. Verse 25 of Chapter IX points to the same conclusion.

The above verse speaks of those who, though casting aside the scriptural injunctions, worship different objects with an innate faith which is threefold in character; but nothing has been said about those who not only flout the injunctions of the scriptures but are also lacking in faith, and who practise austere penance etc. The question, therefore, arises: To which category do these people belong ? The Lord answers this query in the following two verses.

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः।
दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः॥ ५॥

ये जनाः men who; अशास्त्रविहितम् of an arbitrary kind not enjoined by the scriptures; घोरम् dire; तपः penance; तप्यन्ते practise; दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः (are) full of hypocrisy and egotism; कामरागबलान्विताः (and) obsessed with desire, attachment and pride of power.

Men who practise dire penance of an arbitrary type not sanctioned by the scriptures, and who are full of hypocrisy and egotism and are obsessed with desire, attachment and pride of power. (5)

The word 'Tapas', qualified by the adjectives 'Aśāstravihitam' and 'Ghoram', denotes austere penance which is not sanctioned by the scriptures, which does not conform to the scriptural injunctions, which seeks to mortify the body and the senses through pretentious displays of various kinds and which is dreadful to look at.

Those who perform such dire penances discountenanced by the scriptures are lacking in faith. They set up a fine show in order to impress and cheat others and are ever puffed up with pride. That is why they have been spoken of as 'Dambhāhaṅkārasaṁyuktāḥ'.

These people are deeply attached to worldly enjoyments; the result is that their thirst for those enjoyments is ever on the increase. They believe that they will secure whatever they seek, and that they possess

infinite strength which is sufficient to foil all attempts to interfere with their plans. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by calling such people 'Kāmarāgabalānvitāḥ'.

कर्शयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः।
मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्ध्यासुरनिश्चयान्॥ ६॥

शरीरस्थम् constituting their body; भूतग्रामम् the elements; च and; अन्तःशरीरस्थम् dwelling in the heart; माम् Me (the supreme Spirit); एव also; कर्शयन्तः emaciating; तान् those; अचेतसः senseless people; आसुरनिश्चयान् having demoniac disposition; विद्धि Know.

And who emaciate the elements constituting their body as well as Me, the supreme Spirit, dwelling in their heart,—know these senseless people to have demoniac disposition. (6)

The compound word 'Bhūtagramam' stands here for the aggregate of twenty-three categories, viz., the five gross elements, mind, intellect, ego, the ten organs of perception and action and the five objects of senses, which have already been mentioned in XIII.5 under the name of Kṣetra.

Those who perform dire penance of an arbitrary type not sanctioned by the scriptures not only emaciate and weaken their psycho-physical organism, which is nothing but a conglomeration of the twenty-three elements enumerated above, but also torment God dwelling within their heart by their dreadful pursuits. For God is seated in the heart of all as their very Self. Hence to torment one's own self or the self of others is to torment God Himself. It is in this sense that these people are said to torment the elements as well as God.

The word 'Acetasaḥ' refers to those stupid men who violate the injunctions of the Śāstras and are lacking in intelligence, and whose intellect is clouded.

Having pointed out the marks of those who are endowed with faith of a threefold character as well as of those who perform dire penance, the Lord now undertakes to classify food, sacrifice, penance and charity under three heads, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, in order that one may choose the Sāttvika type and reject the Rājasika and Tāmasika ones.

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः।
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु॥ ७॥

आहारः food; अपि as well; सर्वस्य to all (according to their innate disposition); त्रिविधः of three kinds; प्रियः agreeable; भवति is; तु and; तथा even so; यज्ञः sacrifice; तपः penance; दानम् (and) charity (too); तेषाम् their; इमम् this; भेदम् distinction; शृणु hear (from Me).

Food also, which is agreeable to different men according to their innate disposition, is of three Kinds. And likewise sacrifice, penance and charity too are of three kinds each; hear their distinction from Me. (7)

The use of the indeclinable 'Api' after 'Āhāraḥ' shows that just as faith and worship have been divided under three heads, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, even so food also is of three kinds.

The pronoun 'Sarvasya' stands for the

whole human race; for food is taken by all men and it is human beings who form the subject of discussion in this chapter.

The constitution of a man's mind is determined by the kind of food he takes and, as has been stated in verse 3 above, a man's faith corresponds to his mental constitution. If a man's diet is pure, his mind too will be pure as a matter of course. "Purity of mind follows from purity of diet"* *(Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VII.xxvi.2). And purity of thought and feelings, of faith and other qualities, and even so of actions too depends on purity of mind. It was therefore, that the Lord thought it necessary to discuss the subject of food in this connection even without any reference from Arjuna. Besides, while worship of gods and others is not universally practised, food is a thing which concerns all. Just as a man is believed to have a Sāttvika, Rājasika or Tāmasika disposition according as he worships gods who are Sāttvika by nature, demigods and demons who have a Rājasika temperament, or ghosts and spirits who have a Tāmasika disposition, even so of the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika types of food, the one which is dear to him determines the mode of Prakṛti by which he is dominated. It is this idea which has been particularly emphasized by the use of the adjective 'Priyaḥ'. Hence a man can as well be judged by the nature of his diet. It is for this reason that the Lord declares food to be of three kinds in this verse. His further motive in doing so was to help people choose the Sāttvika type and reject the Rājasika and Tāmasika ones. What is true of food should be understood to hold good in the case of sacrifice, charity and penance as well.

In the above verse the Lord invited Arjuna to hear the classification of food, sacrifices, penance and charity. Accordingly He proceeds to describe in the following verse the Sāttvika types of food, which are worth taking.

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।
रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥ ८ ॥

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः promoting longevity, intelligence, vigour, health, happiness and cheerfulness; रस्याः sweet; स्निग्धाः bland; स्थिराः sustaining; हृद्याः naturally agreeable; आहाराः foods, *i.e.*, edibles; सात्त्विकप्रियाः (are) dear to the Sāttvika type of men.

Foods which promote longevity, intelligence, vigour, health, happiness and cheerfulness, and which are sweet, bland, substantial and naturally agreeable, are dear to the Sāttvika type of men. (8)

(1) 'Āyuḥ' means life; foods which augment vitality and thereby prolong one's life are called 'Āyurvivardhanāḥ'.

(2) The word 'Sattva' here stands for the intellect. Foods which tend to make one's intellect pure or transparent, sharp, accurate and subtle are said to be 'Sattvavivardhanāḥ'.

(3) Bodily and mental vigour, which contributes to one's success in a noble enterprise is called 'Bala'. Foods which augment this inner and outer strength or

* आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः।

energy are referred to here as 'Balavivardhanāḥ'.

(4) Foods which serve as a natural antidote for one's mental and physical ailments are called 'Ārogyavivardhanāḥ'.

(5) When there is a feeling of contentment, Sāttvika delight and freshness in the heart and when signs of joy born of a guileless heart are visible on one's face and other limbs of the body, one is said to be happy. Foods which promote such happiness are called 'Sukhavivardhanāḥ'.

(6) Amiability of disposition and a pleasing look on the face and other parts of the body is what is referred to here as 'Prīti'. And foods which enhance this Prīti are called 'Prītivivardhanāḥ'.

The compound adjective 'Āyuḥsattvabalārogyasukhaprītivivardhanāḥ' thus covers all articles of food of a Sāttvika type, such as milk, clarified butter, vegetables, fruits, sugar, wheat, barley, grams and rice etc.

The adjectives 'Rasyāḥ', 'Snigdhāḥ', 'Sthirāḥ' and 'Hṛdyāḥ' are intended to distinguish such articles from those of a non-Sāttvika character.

(1) Milk, sugar and other substances having a sweet flavour are referred to here as 'Rasyāḥ'.

(2) Clarified and unclarified butter, oils extracted from Sāttvika substances and other fatty products are called 'Snigdhāḥ'.

(3) Foods which sustain the body for a long time and give strength are spoken of as 'Sthirāḥ'.

(4) Foods which are not made of foul or impure substances and excite a Sāttvika appetite on their very sight are known as 'Hṛdyāḥ'.

Edibles of four kinds, viz., Bhakṣya (those which have to be chewed before they can be swallowed), Bhojya (those which are directly swallowed), Lehya (those which are licked) and Coṣya (those which are sucked) are referred to here as 'Āhārāḥ'. The subject has been fully dealt with in the commentary on verse 14 of Chapter XV, which speaks of these four kinds of food under the name of 'Caturvidham Annam'.

Even though the Lord undertook in the preceding verse to classify food under three heads, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika. He has thought fit to mention here foods that are dear to men of Sāttvika disposition, rather than those which are Sāttvika themselves. The reason is not far to seek. A man loves that very food which partakes of the Guṇa predominant in him. Hence when we talk of foods which are liked by men of a particular disposition, we indirectly mention the class to which such foods belong. This indirect method has been employed in order to show that the disposition of a man can be judged by the kind of food he loves.

Having mentioned the diet of Sāttvika men, which deserves to be adopted by all, the Lord now describes in the following two verses the diet of Rājasika and Tāmasika men, which should be shunned by all.

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।
आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥ ९ ॥

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः bitter, acid, salty, overhot, pungent, dry and burning; **दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः** causing suffering, grief and sickness; **आहाराः** foods; **राजसस्य** to a man of Rājasika temperament; **इष्टाः** (are) dear.

Food which are bitter, acid, salty, overhot, pungent, dry and burning, and which cause suffering, grief and sickness, are dear to the Rājasika type of men. (9)

Neem and Karela etc., fall under the category of bitter foods. Some interpret the word 'Kaṭu' as pungent and include pepper etc., in this class. But the separate mention of the word 'Tikṣṇa'; which evidently stands for pungent foods, justifies our construing the word 'Kaṭu' as bitter. Tamarind and lemon etc., may be classed as acid foods, alkalis and salts of various kinds are included in salty foods; foods which are taken while they are yet steaming are classed as overhot; chillies etc., are typical pungent foods; parched grains may serve as examples of dry foods and mustard seeds etc., may be taken to represent burning foods. The pain which is experienced in the throat etc., at the time of taking such foods, the burning sensation felt in the tongue, palate etc., the acidity of teeth, the difficulty experienced in chewing articles, the watering of eyes and nose hiccup etc.,—all these are included in the suffering which such foods are known to entail. The sense of remorse one feels after taking such foods is referred to here as Śoka or grief, and the distemper caused by them is spoken of as Āmaya or disease. The foods mentioned above bring all these in their wake. Hence they have been called 'Duḥkhaśokāmayapradāḥ', and hence they should be discarded.

The use of the compound adjective 'Rājasapriyāḥ' with reference to 'Āhārāḥ' is intended to convey that such foods are of a Rājasika type. Hence those who like such foods should be classed as Rājasika men.

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत्।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम्॥ १०॥

यत् which (is); यातयामम् half-cooked; गतरसम् insipid; पूति putrid; पर्युषितम् stale; च and; उच्छिष्टम् polluted; च and; अमेध्यम् (which is) impure; अपि too; भोजनम् (that) food; तामसप्रियम् (is) dear to Tāmasika men.

Food which is half-cooked or half-ripe, insipid, putrid, stale and polluted, and which is impure too, is dear to men of Tāmasika disposition. (10)

Etymologically speaking, 'Yātayāmam' means that which was cooked three hours before. But the separate mention of 'Paryuṣitam' (stale food) as falling under the category to Tāmasika food precludes such interpretation. If 'Yātayāmam' is taken to mean that which was cooked only three hours before, there is no meaning in including stale food in the category of Tāmasika food. For when food cooked only three hours before is branded as Tāmasika, that which has stayed overnight is all the more so, so that there was no need to mention it separately. It is for this reason that 'Yātayāmam' has been interpreted as half-cooked or half-ripe. Nevertheless, if anyone insists on interpreting it as cooked three hours before, there is no objection either.

A juicy substance (e.g., an orange or sugarcane) which has lost its succulent character due to exposure or contact with fire etc., or on account of its being out of season, is called 'Gatarasam'.

Putrid foods are those which contain

a naturally offensive smell (e.g., onion, garlic etc.) or which are rendered foul through fermentation or any other chemical process.

Food which has been cooked the day before is called 'Paryuṣita' or stale. Foods which are allowed to stay overnight get spoiled and give rise to many diseases in case one chooses to partake of them. Fruits also which were plucked long ago and have accordingly been spoiled should be regarded as stale.

Food which is left on one's dish after one has partaken of it is called 'Ucchiṣṭa'.

Animal foods involving destruction of life, such as meat, eggs etc., and prohibited intoxicants such as spirituous liquor, toddy etc.,—which are impure by their very nature or which have been polluted by evil association of any kind,—through contact with any impure substance, place, utensil or person, or because of their connection with foul money earned by unfair or unrighteous means—all these are included in the category of impure food. The use of such articles has been banned even in the worship of gods.

The use of the particles 'Ca' and 'Api' is intended to convey that besides those articles which suffer from the above defects in a large or small measure, hemp drugs (Gā̐jā and Bhā̐ga), tobacco, cigarettes and bidis extracts, distilled spirits, impure medicines and all other articles which give rise to Tamoguṇa are Tāmasika in character.

By speaking such food as dear to men of a Tāmasika disposition the Lord indirectly pronounces it to be Tāmasika in character; and the fact that they like such food is indicative of their Tāmasika disposition.

Having thus pointed out the three divisions of food, the Lord now proceeds to classify sacrifices under three heads. Out of these, He first of all gives the characteristics of a Sāttvika Yajña, which is worth performing.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते।
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः॥ ११॥

यः which; विधिदृष्टः ordained by scriptural injunctions; यज्ञः sacrifice; यष्टव्यम् एव sacrifices must be performed; इति thus; मनः the mind; समाधाय satisfying; अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिः by those who expect no return; इज्यते is offered; सः that; सात्त्विकः (is) Sāttvika in character.

The sacrifice which is offered, as ordained by scriptural injunctions, by men who expect no return and who believe that such sacrifices must be performed, is Sāttvika in character. (11)

The use of the compound adjective 'Vidhidṛṣṭaḥ' with 'Yajñaḥ' is intended to convey that of the many sacrifices enjoined by the Vedas, as well as of those enjoined by the Smṛti texts that alone which is prescribed in the Śāstras as binding on a particular Varṇa (grade in society) or Āśrama (stage in life) is Sāttvika in character. A sacrifice which is performed in an arbitrary way contrary to the scriptures is not Sāttvika.

Pouring oblations of clarified butter etc., into the sacred fire for the propitiation of gods and others, or duly worshipping

anyone in any other form by offering him anything whatsoever is what is spoken of as 'Yajña'.

Again, he who takes into his head that no incentive to work is left for the man who does not expect any return for his work, will never undertake any sacrifice in a disinterested spirit. Therefore, that sacrifice alone is Sāttvika, which is undertaken in a disinterested spirit with the firm belief that a man must perform the sacrifice which the Śāstras prescribe for him with due regard to his Varṇa (grade in society) and Āśrama (stage in life), and that failure to perform such a sacrifice, is to disobey the commandment of God.

The compound word 'Aphalākāṅkṣibhiḥ' stands for those who expect no return for their sacrifice in the shape of wife, progeny, wealth, house, honour, fame, prestige, victory, heavenly bliss or any other enjoyment of this world or the next or the eradication of any evil or suffering (*vide VI.1*). A sacrifice which is undertaken with an interested motive cannot be wholly Sāttvika even if it is performed in accordance with the scriptural injunctions; indifference to its fruit is supremely essential for investing it with a wholly Sāttvika character.

The Lord now describes the characteristics of a Rājasika sacrifice.

अभिसन्धाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत्।
इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम्॥ १२॥

तु but; भरतश्रेष्ठ O best of Bharatas, Arjuna; दम्भार्थम् एव for the sake of mere show; च or; फलम् the fruit; अपि even; अभिसन्धाय keeping in view; यत् which; इज्यते is offered; तम् that; यज्ञम् sacrifice; राजसम् of the Rājasika type; विद्धि know.

That sacrifice; however, which is performed for the sake of mere show or even with an eye to its fruit, know it to be Rājasika, Arjuna. (12)

The disjunctive particle 'Tu' is intended to distinguish the Rājasika type of sacrifices from the Sāttvika type mentioned in the preceding verse.

A sacrifice which is undertaken with a view to establishing one's reputation as one devoted to sacrifices, even though one has no faith in sacrificial performances, is said to be undertaken for mere show.

Again, a sacrifice which is performed for securing a wife, progeny, wealth, house, honour, fame, prestige, victory, heavenly bliss or any other enjoyment of this world or the next or for the eradication of any evil is said to have been undertaken with an interested motive.

A sacrifice which has been undertaken with an interested motive is Rājasika in character even if it is enjoined by the scriptures and has been performed with reverence; even so that which is undertaken for the sake of mere show is equally Rājasika. That which suffers from both these defects is, therefore, much more so. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the particles 'Eva', 'Api' and 'Ca' in the first half of this verse.

The Lord now proceeds to describe the characteristics of a Tāmasika sacrifice, which is wholly worth abstaining from.

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम्।
श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते॥ १३॥

विधिहीनम् without regard for the scriptural injunctions; असृष्टान्नम् in which no food is offered; मन्त्रहीनम् without sacred chant; अदक्षिणम् without sacrificial fees; श्रद्धाविरहितम् devoid of faith; यज्ञम् sacrifice; तामसम् of the Tāmasika type; परिचक्षते they call.

A sacrifice which has no respect for scriptural injunctions, in which no food is offered, and no sacrificial fees are paid, which is without sacred chant and devoid of faith, is said to be Tāmasika. (13)

'Vidhihīnam' is that which is not enjoined by the Śāstras or in which there is no respect for the scriptural injunction or which has been performed in an arbitrary way setting aside the injunctions of the scriptures.

'Asṛṣṭānnam' is that in which there is no feeding of Brāhmaṇas and no gifts of food.

'Mantrahīnam' is that in which there is no sacred chant as enjoined by the scriptures,—in which either no sacred formulas have been employed at all or they have not been employed in accordance with the scriptural injunctions, or in which such formulas have been occasionally omitted for want of respect for them.

'Adakṣiṇam' is that in which no sacrificial fees have been paid to the officiating priests and no gifts made to other Brāhmaṇas.

Lastly, 'Śraddhāvirahitam' is that which is actuated by self-conceit, arrogance, delusion, hypocrisy, and egotism etc., and is marked by lack of reverence.

Having thus described the characteristics of the threefold Yajña, the Lord now takes up the subject of Tapas, and in order to point out the characteristics of Sāttvika penance in the following four verses, first discusses the nature of bodily penance.

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम्।
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते॥ १४॥

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनम् worship of gods, the Brāhmaṇas; one's elders and wise men; शौचम् purity; आर्जवम् straightness; ब्रह्मचर्यम् continence; च and; अहिंसा harmlessness; शारीरम् bodily; तपः penance; उच्यते is called.

Worship of gods, the Brāhmaṇas, one's elders and wise men, purity, straightness, continence and harmlessness—this is called bodily penance. (14)

The word 'Deva' stands here for Brahmā (the Creator), Śiva (the god of destruction), the sun-god, the moon-god, Durgā (Śiva's Consort), Agni (the god of fire), Varuṇa (the god presiding over waters), Yama (the god of judgment), Indra (the lord of paradise) and all other gods mentioned in the Śāstras—whose worship has been enjoined in the Śāstras. The word 'Dvija', though denoting in its wider application all the three higher castes, viz., the Brāhmaṇa, (the priestly class), the Kṣatriya (the warrior class) and the Vaiśya (the trading class), stands exclusively for the Brāhmaṇa; for the latter

alone is an object of worship for all. The word 'Guru' in this verse covers one's parents, preceptor, aged folk and those who are superior in Varṇa (grade in society), Āśrama (stage in life) and age etc. And the word 'Prājña' denotes saintly and wise men who possess adequate knowledge of God. Treating all these with due respect and attention, bowing to them, prostrating oneself at their feet, washing their feet, offering them sandalpaste, flowers, incense, light, food etc., rendering them appropriate services etc., and making reasonable attempts to gratify them—all these are included in their worship.

The word 'Śauca' has been used here in the restricted sense of mere external purity. For purity of speech has been mentioned separately in verse 15 and purity of mind in verse 16. 'Śauca' consists in cleaning one's body with water, earth etc., and keeping all one's bodily activities pure (XVI.3).

'Ārjava' means straightness. Having been mentioned as a part of bodily penance it signifies absence of crookedness in the form of stiffness and twisting of the body.

'Brahmacarya' consists in abstaining from sexual commerce in all its bodily forms and carefully preserving one's seminal fluid.

'Ahiṁsā' means taking a vow never to inflict with one's body the least suffering in any form on any creature whatsoever.

The above virtues and practices are mainly connected with the body, or in other words, the body plays the principal part in them; and they wash away all the impurities of the body and the senses and purify them. Hence they are known as bodily penance.

The Lord now proceeds to describe the austerity of speech.

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत्।
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते॥ १५॥

यत् which (is); अनुद्वेगकरम् causing no annoyance; प्रियहितम् agreeable and wholesome; च and; सत्यम् truthful; वाक्यम् speech; च and; स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनम् study of the Vedas and other Śāstras and the practice of Nāma-Japa or repetition of the Divine Name; एव verily; वाङ्मयम् तपः the austerity of speech; उच्यते is called.

Words which cause no annoyance to others and are truthful, agreeable and wholesome, as well as the study of the Vedas and other Śāstras and the practice of repetition of the Divine Name—this is known as the austerity of speech. (15)

Words which cause no annoyance to others and are absolutely untainted by calumny and slander etc., are called 'Anudvegakara'. Similarly, truthful words are those which state the bare truth in order to convey to others a correct idea of what one has actually seen, heard or experienced. Loving, sweet, artless and gentle words, which are pleasing to hear and are altogether free from acerbity, pungency, coldness, sarcasm, insolence and other faults, are known as 'Priya'. And words which are ultimately beneficial to all, which are altogether free from violence malice, jealousy and animosity, and are full of love, compassion and good wishes are called 'Hita'.

The uttering of only, such words as

combine in themselves all the four virtues, viz., unoffensiveness, veracity, agreeability and wholesomeness, and are free from all impurities of speech mentioned in the Śāstras, can be recognized as the austerity of speech; words which have the least tinge of these impurities and lack in any of the aforesaid virtues do not fall under the category of complete austerity of speech. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the particle 'Ca' after 'Priyahitam'.

Reciting the Vedas and their auxiliaries viz., works on grammar, phonetics etc., the Smṛti texts, the Purāṇas and Stotras or panegyrics to God etc., according to one's qualifications, uttering the praises, glory and names of God and offering prayers etc., to God—all these are included in 'Svādhyāyābhyasanam'.

All the above virtues and practices are connected with speech; they eradicate all the impurities of speech and purify it along with the mind; hence they have been spoken of as the austerity of speech.

The Lord now tells us what is austerity of the mind.

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः।
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते॥ १६॥

मनःप्रसादः cheerfulness of mind; सौम्यत्वम् placidity; मौनम् habit of contemplation on God; आत्मविनिग्रहः control of the mind; भावसंशुद्धिः perfect purity of inner feelings; इति एतत् all this; मानसम् तपः austerity of the mind; उच्यते is known as.

Cheerfulness of mind, placidity, habit of contemplation of God, control of the mind and perfect purity of inner feelings—all this is called austerity of the mind. (16)

'Manaḥprasādaḥ' means purity and cheerfulness of mind. In other words, when the mind is freed from morbidities like dejection and fear, anxiety and grief, agony and perturbation etc., and is filled with light and vivacity, it is said to be cheerful.

Complete absence of such afflicting morbidities as coldness, jealousy, violence, vindictiveness, ferocity, ruthlessness etc., and the constant placidity and coolness of the mind is known as 'Saumyatvam'.

'Maunam' means the constant application of the mind to the thought of the virtues, glory, truth, essential character, sports and names etc., of God or to an enquiry about Brahma or the Absolute.

When the restlessness of the mind totally disappears and it gets steady and thoroughly disciplined, it is said to be controlled. This is what is known as 'Ātmavinigrahaḥ'.

'Bhāvasaṁśuddhiḥ' means the complete elimination from the mind of evil propensities like partiality and prejudice, lust and anger, greed and infatuation, arrogance and malice, jealousy and animosity, scorn and contumely, envy and intolerance, obstinate error and idle thought, aversion to what is desirable and contemplating what is unwelcome, on the one hand, and the constant blossoming of virtues like forbearance, love, politeness etc., on the other.

All the virtues mentioned in this verse are connected with the mind, and eradicating all its impurities purify it; hence they have been spoken of as the austerity of the mind.

The Lord now defines Sāttvika penance.

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः।
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते॥ १७॥

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभि: expecting no return; युक्तैः नरैः by self-disciplined men; परया श्रद्धया with supreme faith; तप्तम् practised; तत् that, above-mentioned; त्रिविधम् threefold; तपः penance; सात्त्विकम् Sāttvika; परिचक्षते (they) call.

This threefold penance performed with supreme faith by Yogīs expecting no return is called Sāttvika. (17)

'Aphalākāṅkṣī' is he who never and on no account entertains the least craving for any return whatsoever in the shape of enjoyments of this world or the next or the cessation of suffering; and he whose mind, intellect and senses, being disciplined and untainted, can never be excited by enjoyment of any kind whatsoever, and who is entirely free from attachment, is called 'Yukta'. Thus demonstrating by the use of the above two epithets the need of a disinterested spirit, the Lord thereby shows that the threefold penance described in the above three verses assumes a wholly Sāttvika character only when it is performed by such disinterested persons.

Consummate and reverent faith in the value, glory and essential character of the above-mentioned threefold penance, as depicted in the Śāstras,—a faith which is more living than what we have in things which are open to perception,—is called 'supreme faith'. And the aforesaid penance, when it is performed with exceptional reverence and zeal, remaining unshaken under all circumstances and minding not in the least the greatest obstacles or hardships, is spoken of as 'Śraddhayā parayā taptam'.

The use of the adjectives 'Tat' and 'Trividham' with 'Tapaḥ' is intended to convey that the threefold penance relating to the body, speech and mind, mentioned in the preceding three verses alone, can be Sāttvika in character. Other forms of penance, such as those referred to in verse 5 of this very chapter as 'not sanctioned by the scriptures' (Aśāstravihitam) and 'dreadful' (Ghoram), are never Sāttvika. It further shows that although the forms of penance enumerated in verses 14, 15 and 16 above are Sāttvika in character, they are wholly Sāttvika only when they are performed in the spirit indicated in the present verse.

The Lord now defines the Rājasika type of penance.

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत्।
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम्॥ १८॥

यत् तपः the penance which; सत्कारमानपूजार्थम् for the sake of renown, honour and worship; च as well as; एव for any other selfish gain; दम्भेन (either in all sincerity or) by way of ostentation; क्रियते is performed; तत् that; अध्रुवम् चलम् yielding an uncertain (and) momentary fruit; इह here; राजसम् (as) Rājasika in character; प्रोक्तम् has been spoken of.

The penance which is performed for the sake of renown, honour and

worship as well as for any other selfish gain either in all sincerity or by way of ostentation, and yields an uncertain and momentary fruit, has been spoken of here as Rājasika. (18)

The use of the adjective 'Yat' with 'Tapas' is intended to convey that whatever penances have been mentioned in the Śāstras in the form of sacred vows, fasts and self-discipline fall under the category of Rājasika penance if they are performed with some interested motive.

The reputation that one gains in the world, through publicity given to one's austerities, as an ascetic of a very high order unequalled in penance and a man of supreme excellence is called 'Satkāra'. 'Māna' consists in welcoming a man as an ascetic, rising before him, bowing to him, presenting him with an address or showing respect to him through any other gesture. And waving Āratī before him, washing his feet, offering him leaves and flowers and other recognized forms of worship, and carrying out his behests—all these are known by the name of 'Pūjā'.

The use of the particles 'Ca' and 'Eva' in the first half of this verse is intended to show that austerity practised for attaining any other selfish end is also included in the category of Rājasika penance.

Austerity, whether of a profane or sacred character, which is practised for mere ostentation assuming the guise of an ascetic with a view to gaining any selfish end through fraudulence, even though one has no real faith in penance,—this is what is known as practising austerity through 'Dambha'.

It should be noted in this connection that a selfish motive alone brings down austerity to the Rājasika level; it is much more so if it is accompanied with ostentation.

There is no surety about our gaining the object sought through such penance; hence such austerity has been declared as 'Adhruva', and it has been spoken of as 'Cala' because whatever return we get for such penance does not last for ever, it is bound to perish.

The Lord now defines penance of the Tāmasika type, which is altogether worth abstaining from.

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ १९ ॥

यत् तपः the penance which; मूढग्राहेण through perversity; आत्मनः पीडया (accompanied) with self-mortification; वा or; परस्य उत्सादनार्थम् for harming another; क्रियते is performed; तत् that; तामसम् Tāmasika (in character); उदाहृतम् has been declared to be.

Austerity which is practised through perversity and is accompanied with self-mortification or is intended to harm others, such austerity has been declared as Tāmasika. (19)

The word 'Tāmasam' in this verse refers to the type of penance mentioned in verses 5 and 6 of this chapter, which is not sanctioned by the scriptures but is conceived by one's own mind and which is characterized by dreadful acts of self-

mortification, such as tying one's feet to the bough of a tree and hanging with one's head downwards, sitting on iron spikes and so on, performed with some evil intent either by way of ostentation or through ignorance. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the adjective 'Yat' with 'Tapaḥ'.

Obstinately clinging to any practice whatsoever as an act of penance without knowing the true characteristics of austerity is called 'Mūḍhagrāha'. And undertaking with such obstinacy, as an act of penance, a Tāmasika practice characterized by mortification of one's body, speech and mind,—this is what is meant by performing a penance through perversity.

The word 'Ātmanaḥ' in this verse stands for one's mind, speech and body; and their mortification is referred to here as 'Ātmanaḥ Pīḍayā'. Therefore, an act of penance which is not sanctioned by the scriptures and subjects one's mind etc., or any of them to undue hardships is said to be accompanied by self-mortification.

Mortifying one's mind, speech and body with intent to usurp or destroy others, property, exterminate their family line or harm them in any way,—this is what is called 'Parasyotsādanārtham Tapaḥ'.

The use of the particle 'Vā' is intended to convey that an act of penance which has any of these characteristics is Tāmasika in character.

Having defined the three kinds of penance, the Lord now proceeds to mention the threefold division of charity and with this end in view defines the Sāttvika type first.

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे।
देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम्॥ २०॥

दातव्यम् it is one's duty to give; **इति** with this idea; **यत् दानम्** a gift which; **देशे** in a fit place; **च** and; **काले** at a suitable time; **च** and (also); **पात्रे** on the appearance of a deserving person; **अनुपकारिणे** on one who is no benefactor; **दीयते** is bestowed; **तत् दानम्** that gift; **सात्त्विकम्** (as) Sāttvika; **स्मृतम्** has been pronounced.

A gift which is bestowed with a sense of duty on one who is no benefactor when a fit place, suitable time and a deserving person are available, that gift has been pronounced as Sāttvika. **(20)**

Showing by the use of the words 'Dātavyamiti' that a disinterested spirit is essential for the full development of Sattvaguṇa, the Lord tells us in this verse that it is man's paramount duty to bestow gifts, enjoined by the scriptures, with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, condition and circumstances to devote his possessions to the good of others to the best of his ability. Failing to do so he falls from the human state and flouts the blessed commandment of God. Therefore, that gift alone is wholly Sāttvika in character, which is bestowed with a pure sense of duty without expecting any return either here or hereafter.

Only that place and time are fit and suitable for gratifying others through the gift of a particular object, at which that object is particularly needed. For instance, that place and time alone are fit and suitable for the gift of food and water,

which are marked by the prevalence of famine or draught—no matter if that place is no place of pilgrimage and that time has no special religious significance. Besides these, ordinarily speaking, Kurukṣetra, Haridvāra, Mathurā, Kāśī, Prayāga, Naimiṣāraṇya and other sacred places, and all sacred occasions such as the solar and lunar eclipses, the full moon and new moon, Saṁkrānti (the passage of the sun from one zodiacal sign to another), Ekādaśī (the eleventh day of every dark and bright fortnight)—which have been commended in the Śāstras for charity—are suitable places and occasions. the words 'Deśe' and 'Kāle' in this verse refer to all these places and occasions.

He who is in need of a particular object at a particular place and time is a 'Pātra' or fit person to receive a gift of that object at that very place and time. For instance, all living beings who are hungry, thirsty, naked, poor, sick, afflicted, forlorn and terror-stricken are worthy of receiving gifts of food, water, cloth, wherewithal to make both ends meet, medicine, consolation, shelter and assurance of safety respectively. The fitness of afflicted creatures is not qualified by considerations of caste, nationality or time. Their affliction alone is a test of their fitness. Besides these, learned Brāhmaṇas of excellent conduct, ideal Brahmacārīs or religious students, Vānaprasthas or hermits living in a forest and Saṁnyāsīs or recluses who have renounced the world, and those who have taken a vow of service are fit to receive, according to their respective qualifications, gifts of money and other articles which are within the means of the donor and have been recommended for them by the Śāstras.

It is certainly obligatory to render good offices to, and try to gratify to one's level best, those to whom one owes a debt to gratitude. Nay, men of a noble disposition cannot help obliging their benefactor. They know that an attempt to return a true obligation is to undervalue it; for a real obligation cannot be repaid at all. Hence they render good offices to him only for their own satisfaction; and whatever they do, appears inadequate to them. They remain overwhelmed with gratitude. In *Śrī Rāmacaritamānasa* of Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa, Bhagavān Śrī Rāma says to His devotee Hanumān:—

"O monkey-god, there is none among celestial, human beings and sages, who has rendered such valuable services to Me as yourself. How should I requite your services? My mind is unable even to stand your looks."

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata,* Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa proclaims His indebtedness to the cowherd damsels of Vraja. Under such circumstances, offering anything to a benefactor can never be unjustifiable or a Rājasika act; of course, it does not come within the purview of 'Dāna' or charity. It is rather a natural gesture expressive of one's gratitude. Those who regard it as an act of charity really offer insult to the benefactor; while those who are unwilling to oblige a benefactor belong to the category of ungrateful creatures. Hence one must render good offices to one's benefactor.

By insisting that a gift should be bestowed on one who is not a benefactor the Lord seeks to convey that a donor should not expect the least return from the donee or recipient of the gift. That gift alone is Sāttvika, which is bestowed on him in whom one has no selfish interest. As a matter of fact, the Lord thereby simply warns the donor against entertaining a selfish motive.

The Lord now defines a Rājasika gift.

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः।
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम्॥ २१॥

तु however; यत् which; परिक्लिष्टम् in a grudging spirit; च and; प्रत्युपकारार्थम् for getting a service in return; वा or; फलम् a reward; उद्दिश्य expecting; पुनः then; दीयते is given; तत् that; दानम् gift; राजसम् Rājasika (in character); स्मृतम् has been proclaimed.

A gift which is bestowed in a grudging spirit and with the object of getting a service in return or in the hope of obtaining a reward, is called Rājasika. (21)

The disjunctive particle 'Tu' in this verse is intended to distinguish the Rājasika from the Sāttvika type of gifts.

A donation which is given in a reluctant and helpless mood under threat or coercion, due to pressure exerted by respectable and influential men; in response to an importunity or with a covert feeling of discomfiture and sorrow, is said to have been given in a grudging spirit.

A gift bestowed on someone who is of permanent utility or who is expected or calculated to render some useful service, great or small, later on, is no true gift, really speaking; that is something like a sum advanced to ensure a service. For instance, on sacred occasions like a Somavatī Amāvasyā (the last day of a dark fortnight synchronizing with a monday, which is a rare phenomenon) it is customary these days to bestow a gift on such Brāhmaṇas as are useful to ourselves or to our friends or relatives, and who are expected to render some service in future, or to donate a sum to institutions or organizers of institutions who are expected in return to serve our ends in ways more than one. This is what is meant by bestowing a gift with the object of getting a service in return.

Similarly a gift which is bestowed on an individual or institution with the object of gaining honour, fame, prestige and enjoyments, either of this world or the next, or for curing some disease, is said to have been given in the hope of obtaining a reward. Some people seek to derive a number of benefits all at once from a single gift; e.g., they anticipate that:—

(a) The donee or recipient of the gift will feel obliged and will take sides with them in a good or evil cause when the time comes for it;

(b) They will gain reputation, which will add to their prestige and bring honour to them;

(c) Publicity through the press will create an impression on the minds of the general public that the donors are very rich; this will give them a number of advantages in business and they will be able to make maximum profits;

(d) Good reputation will enable them to secure high connections for their sons and daughters, which will serve a number of their ends;

(e) Their gift as a matter of course will yield in the next world the maximum return promised in the Śāstras.

Calculations of this kind detract much from the value of a gift.

The use of the particles 'Vā', 'Punaḥ' and 'Ca' is intended to convey that a gift is Rājasika if it possesses any of the three traits mentioned in the verse.

The Lord now defines a Tāmasika gift.

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते।
असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्॥ २२॥

यत् दानम् a gift which; असत्कृतम् without good grace; अवज्ञातम् (or) disdainfully; अदेशकाले out of time and place; च and; अपात्रेभ्यः to undeserving persons; दीयते is given; तत् that; तामसम् (as) Tāmasika; उदाहृतम् has been spoken of.

A gift which is made without good grace and in a disdainful spirit out of time and place and to undeserving persons, is said to be Tāmasika. (22)

A gift which is given in a cold manner without due attention to the deserving man who comes to receive it, i.e., without greeting him, enquiring after his health, addressing sweet and polite words to him and offering him a seat etc., is known as 'Asatkṛtam'. Similarly a gift which is made with an adverse criticism and unpleasant remarks, which is accompanied with a threat and a strict warning not to appear again, and which is given with words of ridicule or with an insult offered through speech, body or gesture, is called 'Avajñātam'.

That time and place which are not suitable for a gift, that is to say, in which a gift is unnecessary or forbidden by the scriptures (e.g., the gift of a cow in a place where barberous or Mlecchas live or giving away girl in marriage during an eclipse), are referred to here by the compound word 'Adeśakāle'. A gift which is made at such a time and place paves the way for hell, hence it has been denounced as 'Tāmasika'.

Those who need no gift and who have been precluded by the Śāstras from receiving a gift, e.g., he who marks a show of piety, a hypocrite, an imposter, a cruel man, a caluminator, he who is intent on achieving his own selfish ends by depriving others of their means of subsistence, he who affects humility, he who takes forbidden articles such as meat and wine, he who indulges in mean pursuits such as thieving, adultery etc., a swindler, a gambler, an unbeliever and so on, all these are unfit for receiving a gift. A gift bestowed on them is fruitless and leads the donor to hell; hence it is Tāmasika in character. This should, not, however, be taken to debar anyone giving food, water, clothing and medicine etc., to the hungry, thirsty, naked and sick according to their respective needs.

Thus, with a view to declaring sacrifice, austerity and charity etc., of the Sāttvika type as worth practising and those of the Rājasika and Tāmasika types as worth renouncing, sacrifice etc., have been classified under three heads each. The next topic is now introduced in order to show that connection they have with God and how a flaw or defect in the practice of the Sāttvika types of sacrifice, austerity and charity is set right, and so on.

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः।
ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा॥ २३॥

ॐ the syllable OM; तत् the syllable TAT; सत् the syllable SAT; इति this; त्रिविधः threefold; ब्रह्मणः of the Absolute (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified); निर्देशः appellation;

स्मृतः has been declared; तेन by that; पुरा at the cosmic dawn; ब्राह्मणाः the Brāhmaṇas; च and; वेदाः the Vedas; च as well as; यज्ञाः sacrifices etc.; विहिताः were created.

OM, TAT and SAT—This has been declared as the threefold appellation of the Absolute, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. By That the Brāhmaṇas and the Vedas as well as sacrifices were created at the cosmic dawn. (23)

Although there are countless names of Brahma or Almighty God, the appellations, OM, TAT and SAT have been recognized as the foremost in the Vedas and they are specially connected with sacred pursuits like sacrifice, austerity and charity. Hence these three alone have been mentioned here.

The pronoun 'Tena' refers to Brahma who bears the three appellations, rather than to the appellations (Nirdeśaḥ) themselves.

Here it may be urged that while in Chapter III above the entire creation including sacrifices has been spoken of as having emanated from Brahmā, the Lord of creation (III.10), the present verse declares the Brāhmaṇas etc., as having evolved from God Himself; how are these two statements to be reconciled ? In this connection it may be submitted that Brahmā, the lord of creation, has taken his descent from God, while the Brāhmaṇas, the Vedas and sacrifices etc., have all emanated from Brahmā. Therefore, at some places these have been spoken of as having emanated from God Himself, while at others they have been declared as having evolved from Brahmā, the lord of creation. It is, however, just the same.

The word 'Brāhmaṇāḥ' in this verse should be taken to cover all created beings from the Brāhmaṇa downwards; and 'Yajñāḥ' should be understood to include sacrifice, austerity, charity and all other duties of an obligatory nature enjoined by the scriptures.

The idea underlying this verse is that the syllables OM, TAT and SAT are appellations of God, from whom this entire creation consisting of the sacrificer, the act of sacrifice and the body of rules governing such sacrificial performances has emanated; hence the utterance etc., of these appellations corrects the flaws and defects of all these performances. Utterance of the names of God is, therefore, most essential at the beginning of each undertaking.

Here it may be asked: What connection do these three names of God—OM, TAT and SAT—have with sacrifice, austerity and charity etc. ? Anticipating this query, the Lord first tells us about the use of OM.

तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः ।
प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥ २४ ॥

तस्मात् therefore; ब्रह्मवादिनाम् of noble souls given to the recitation of Vedic chants; विधानोक्ताः enjoined by sacred precepts; यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity; सततम् always; ओम् the syllable OM; इति this; उदाहृत्य uttering; प्रवर्तन्ते proceed.

Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity as enjoined by sacred precepts are always commenced by noble souls given to the recitation of Vedic chants with utterance of the divine name OM. (24)

The present verse is primarily intended to reveal the glory of the Divine Name. What the Lord seeks to convey through this verse is that, being a name of God, from whom acts of sacrifice etc., have proceeded, the syllable OM corrects by its very utterance the flaws and defects of all such performances and lends them a sacred and blessed character. Such is the infinite glory of the Divine Name. The word 'Brahmavādinām' refers to those learned Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas who are qualified to perform sacrifices and other sacred acts with reciting the Vedic chants. They never and in no case undertake any sacred performance whatsoever without uttering the holy name OM. Therefore, everyone should emulate their noble example.

Having thus spoken about the use of the syllable OM, the Lord now tells us about the use of another name of God—TAT.

तदित्यनभिसन्धाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः ।
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥ २५ ॥

तत् (all this belongs to God who is denoted by the name of) TAT; इति with this idea; फलम् return; अनभिसन्धाय not expecting; विविधाः of various kinds; यज्ञतपःक्रियाः acts of sacrifice and austerity; च as well as; दानक्रियाः acts of charity; मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः by the seekers of blessedness; क्रियन्ते are performed.

With the idea that all this belongs to God, who is denoted by the appellation TAT, acts of sacrifice and austerity as well as acts of charity of various kinds are performed by the seekers of blessedness expecting no return for them. (25)

The word TAT is a name of God. It has been used in this verse along with the particle 'Iti' in order to explain the object of its utterance. The idea is that uttering this name of God at the commencement of every undertaking, seekers of beatitude entirely give up the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' by remembering that everything belongs to God, from whom the whole of this universe has emanated, and that it is through His articles, according to His behest and for His sake that acts of sacrifice etc., are performed by them, they being a mere instrument.

Ordinary men of the world who follow the injunctions of the scriptures and are qualified to recite Vedic Mantras are unable to overcome the desire for fruit or the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. The seekers of beatitude, however, who need nothing but God-realization, perform every action for the sake of God alone and according to His behest, entirely giving up the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as attachment and the craving for fruit. The Lord has thereby stressed the value of relinquishing the desire for fruit.

Having spoken about the use of the appellation TAT, the Lord now tells us about the use of the third name of God, viz., SAT, in the following two verses.

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥ २६ ॥

सत् SAT; इति एतत् this name of God; सद्भावे in the sense of truth; च and; साधुभावे in the sense of goodness; प्रयुज्यते is employed; तथा and; पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; प्रशस्ते कर्मणि in the sense of a praiseworthy act (too); सच्छब्दः the term SAT; युज्यते is used.

The name of God, SAT, is employed in the sense of truth and goodness. And the word SAT is also used in the sense of a praiseworthy act, Arjuna. (26)

The compound word 'Sadbhāve' in this verse stands for eternity or the immortal truth which lasts for ever, and such is the essential character of God. Hence it is spoken of as SAT.

The guileless and noble disposition of the mind is called 'Sādhubhāva'. It is conducive to God-realization; hence the name of God, 'SAT', forms part of the compound word denoting it, viz. 'Sadbhāva'.

A noble deed which is worth performing and has been enjoined by the Śāstras is spoken of as 'Praśasta' or praiseworthy. Performed in a disinterested spirit, it leads to God-realization. Hence the name of God, 'SAT', is used with reference to it, that is to say, it is called a 'Satkarma'.

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते।
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते॥ २७॥

च and; यज्ञे in sacrifice; तपसि in austerity; च and; दाने in charity; स्थितिः steadfastness; एव likewise; सत् 'Sat'; इति thus; उच्यते is spoken of; च and; तदर्थीयम् performed for the sake of Him, *i.e.*, God; कर्म action; एव verily; सत् 'Sat'; इति so; अभिधीयते is termed.

And steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity and charity is likewise spoken of as 'Sat', and action for the sake of God is verily termed as 'Sat'. (27)

The words 'Yajñe', 'Tapasi' 'Dāne' in this verse denote only the Sāttvika forms of sacrifice, austerity and charity; and faith in and loving reverence for these, which is also spoken of as 'Niṣṭhā', has been referred to here as 'Sthiti'. Being conducive to God-realization, this 'Sthiti' or steadfastness in them is called by the name of 'Sat'.

The word 'Karma', qualified by the adjective 'Tadarthīyam' stands for such action as is performed according to the behest of God and for His sake alone, in which the doer has no selfish interest. Such action purifies the heart of the doer and enables him to realize God; hence it is called 'SAT'.

The use of the particle 'Eva' after the word 'Karma' in the second half of this verse is intended to convey that only such action as is performed for the sake of God is really 'Sat'; other actions, inasmuch as their fruit is evanescent, hardly deserve this epithet.

In this way the Lord pointed out the value of actions such as sacrifice, austerity and charity etc., enjoined by the scriptures and performed with reverence. This naturally tempts one to enquire about the result of those acts of sacrifice etc., which, though enjoined by the Śāstras, are performed without faith. Anticipating this query, the Lord now concludes the chapter with the following remarks.

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत्।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह॥ २८॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; अश्रद्धया without faith; हुतम् that which is offered as an oblation; दत्तम् that which is given; तप्तम् तपः austerity practised; च and; यत् whatever; कृतम् (noble act) is performed; असत् naught; इति so; उच्यते is declared; तत् that (is of avail); नो neither; इह here; न च nor; प्रेत्य hereafter.

An oblation which is offered, a gift given, an austerity practised, and whatever good deed is performed, without faith, it is all termed as naught; therefore, it is of no avail here or hereafter. (27)

An offering into the sacred fire, a gift and an act of penance and other noble deeds are able to purify the heart and bestow rewards in this world or the next only when they are accompanied with faith. Noble deeds done without faith are fruitless; that is why they have been declared as naught (Asat) and of no avail here or hereafter.

There is no need of faith in perpetrating forbidden acts and their fruit too does not depend on one's faith. Moreover, they are perpetrated by those men alone who do not possess full faith in the Śāstras, exalted souls and God Himself, and who do not believe that sinful acts bear fruit; nevertheless they do reap the painful consequences of such acts. Therefore, the words 'Yat Kṛtam' do not include sinful deeds. Besides this, having been mentioned along with noble acts such as sacrifice, charity and austerity, 'Yat Kṛtam' can only denote actions of the same category. Hence the statement that these actions are of no avail here or hereafter cannot apply to sinful deeds; for since they are purely productive of sorrow, there is no possibility whatsoever of their yielding any good results. Hence the present verse speaks only of noble deeds performed without faith, and not of vile deeds.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगो
नाम सप्तदशोऽध्यायः॥ १७॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the seventeenth chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Division of the Threefold Faith."

ॐ

Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā

Chapter XVIII

Mokṣa consists in securing lasting freedom from the bondage of mundane existence in the form of birth and death and realizing God, who is no other than supreme Bliss.

Title of the Chapter

Summing up the substance of all previous chapters, the present one discusses, under the names of 'Sannyāsa' and 'Tyāga' respectively, the Paths of Knowledge and Action, both of which are means to the attainment of Mokṣa, in all their details; and secondly, the teaching of the Gītā has been wound up (XVIII.66) with an exhortation to offer all actions to God, who is the same as Mokṣa. It is for these reasons that the chapter has been given the title of 'Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga'.

In the opening verse of this chapter Arjuna expresses his desire to know the truth about Sannyāsa and Tyāga: in the second and third the Lord records the views of other

Summary of the Chapter

thinkers on the subject; in the fourth and fifth He invites Arjuna to hear His own conclusion about Tyāga, and establishes the advisability of not relinquishing one's obligatory duties, while in the sixth He gives His own considered opinion in the matter of Tyāga, and declares it as superior to the other views. Thereafter, defining the Tāmasika, Rājasika and Sāttvika forms of Tyāga in the seventh, eighth and ninth respectively, He describes the marks of a Tyāgī (man of renunciation) of the Sāttvika type in the tenth and eleventh. Demonstrating the greatness of men of renunciation the Lord winds up the topic of Tyāga in the twelfth. Thereafter, inviting Arjuna to hear His dissertation on Sāṅkhya, the Lord discusses up to the fifteenth the five factors which contribute to the accomplishment of actions, viz., Adhiṣṭhāna etc., according to the viewpoint of Sāṅkhya. Denouncing in the sixteenth the man who regards the pure spirit as the doer, the Lord praises in the seventeenth one who performs actions without claiming the doership. Mentioning the threefold incentive to action as well as the three constituents of action in the eighteenth, the Lord introduces the threefold division of knowledge and action as well as of the doer in the nineteenth, and actually divides them under three heads, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika, and Tāmasika from the twentieth to the twenty-eighth. Introducing in the twenty-ninth the threefold division of Buddhi (reason) and Dhṛti (firmness), the Lord divides them under three heads, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, from the thirtieth to the thirty-fifth. Dividing Sukha (joy) under three heads, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, from the thirty-sixth to the thirty-ninth, the Lord winds up the topic of Guṇas and declares the whole world as made up of the three Guṇas in the fortieth. Thereafter, introducing the topic of the natural functions of the four grades of society in the forty-first, the Lord enumerates the natural functions of the Brāhmaṇas in the forty-second, of the Kṣatriyas in the forty-third and of the Vaiśyas and Śūdras in the

forty-fourth. Declaring in the forty-fifth that men can attain highest perfection through the performance of their respective duties, the Lord tells us in the forty-sixth the method of attaining it. Extolling the performance of one's own duty in the forty-seventh, He discourages renunciation of the same in the forty-eighth. Thereafter, resuming the discussion of Sannyāsayoga from the forty-ninth and declaring that one can attain the highest perfection through Sannyāsa, the Lord undertakes in the fiftieth to speak of the culmination of the Yoga of Knowledge and discusses from the fifty-first to the fifty-fifth the Yoga of Knowledge with its fruit. Thereafter, from the fifty-sixth to the fifty-eighth the Lord points out the glory and fruit of Karmayoga which lays special emphasis on Bhakti and commands Arjuna to practise the same, warning him at the same time of the risk involved in not obeying Him. Declaring in the fifty-ninth and sixtieth the inability of Arjuna to abandon his natural duties due to his inherent nature, the Lord commands him in the sixty-first and sixty-second to take refuge with all his being in God, who is the Lord and inner controller of all. Winding up the topic in the sixty-third and asking Arjuna to do as he pleased after weighing everything, the Lord invites him in the sixty-fourth to hear once more the most esoteric truth, which is the quintessence of the whole Gītā. And imparting in the sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth that most esoteric gospel of exclusive surrender along with its fruit, the Lord winds up the teaching of the Gītā by asking Arjuna to take refuge in Him. Thereafter, warning Arjuna in the sixty-seventh not to impart the teaching of the Gītā to four types of unqualified persons, the Lord stresses the importance of popularizing the Gītā among qualified persons in the sixty-eighth and sixty-ninth, of studying the Gītā in the seventieth, and of merely listening with faith to the recitation of the Gītā in the seventy-first. In the seventy-second the Lord asks Arjuna if he listened to the Gītā with one-pointed attention and whether his delusion was dispelled; and in the seventy-third Arjuna assures the Lord that his delusion was dispelled, wisdom gained and all his doubts removed, and agrees to do His bidding. Thereafter, from the seventy-fourth to the seventy-seventh Sañjaya glorifies the teaching of the Gītā in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, and tells Dhṛtarāṣṭra how the thought of that dialogue as well as of the cosmic form of the Lord filled him with wonder and joy again and again. And he winds up the chapter by proclaiming in the seventy-eighth that the side with which Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna had ranged themselves was sure to win and attain glory etc.

Link of the Discourse

The gospel of the Gītā actually commenced from verse 11 of Chapter II. In verses 11 to 30 of that chapter the Lord taught Jñānayoga and, incidentally establishing the advisability of waging war from the viewpoint of the code of morality laid down for a Kṣatriya, taught Karmayoga from verse 39 right up to the end of the chapter. Thereafter, from Chapter III to Chapter XVII, the Lord detailed a number of disciplines for God-realization, some from the viewpoint of Sāṅkhyayoga and others from that of Karmayoga. Having heard of all these, Arjuna now expresses the desire to know separately and clearly the truth of Sannyāsa or Jñānayoga and of Tyāga or Karmayoga which consists in relinquishing the attachment for fruit, in order to have the essence of the teaching of all chapters in the present chapter.

अर्जुन उवाच

सन्न्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम्।
त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन॥ १॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed Lord, Śrī-Kṛṣṇa; **हृषीकेश** O inner controller; **केशिनिषूदन** O slayer of the demon Keśī (who had taken the form of a mighty horse in order to kill Śrī Kṛṣṇa); **सन्न्यासस्य** of Sannyāsa; **च** as well as; **त्यागस्य** of Tyāga; **तत्त्वम्** the truth; **पृथक्** severally; **वेदितुम्** to know; **इच्छामि** I seek.

Arjuna said: O mighty-armed Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, O inner controller of all, O Slayer of Keśī, I wish to know severally the truth of Sannyāsa and Tyāga. (1)

The use of the vocatives 'Mahābāho', 'Hṛṣikeśa' and 'Keśiniṣūdana' is intended to convey that Śrī Kṛṣṇa being Almighty God Himself, the inner controller of all and the destroyer of all evils, knows full well what Arjuna, seeks to learn from Him. Arjuna, therefore, expects that the Lord would attend to his prayer and enlighten him on the subject in such a way as to enable him to grasp it fully and correctly and to resolve all his doubts completely.

In the present verse Arjuna seeks light on the following points; what is the essential character of Sannyāsa? What type of ideas and actions are helpful to it and what are prejudicial to it? How is Sāṅkhyayoga practised with worship and how is it practised without worship? Even so what is the essential character of Tyāga (*i.e.*, Karmayoga, which consists in relinquishing the attachment for fruit). How do they practise Karmayoga of the unmixed type? What practices are helpful to it and what hinder it? What is Karmayoga mixed with Bhakti or Devotion? What is the nature of Karmayoga dominated by Bhakti? And how do they practise Karmayoga mixed with Bhakti and Karmayoga dominated by Bhakti while performing their secular and sacred duties? Arjuna further requests that the points of difference between the two may be clearly brought out, so that they may not be promiscuously blended or confused with each other.

A critical survey of this chapter will show that the points mentioned above have all been touched by the Lord in the course of it. Thus the essential character of Sannyāsa (Jñānayoga) has been discussed in verses 13 to 17. The Sāttvika virtues and actions mentioned in verses 19 to 40 are helpful to the practice of this discipline, while the Rājasika and Tāmasika traits and actions are hostile to it. Verses 50 to 55 describe in detail the mode as well as the fruit of the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga with worship, while verse 17 gives the process of pure Sāṅkhyayoga.

Even so verse 6 reveals the essential character of Karmayoga (which consists in relinquishing the attachment for fruit). Verse 9 gives us under the name of Sāttvika Tyāga the mode of practice of the pure or unmixed type of Karmayoga. Verses 47 and 48 pronounce the performance of one's own duty as helpful to the pursuit of this discipline and the Tāmasika and Rājasika types of Tyāga as mentioned in verses 7 and 8 as impediments to it. Verses 45 and 46 discuss Karmayoga blended with devotion, while

verses 56 to 66 speak of Karmayoga dominated by Devotion. Verse 46 teaches us how to practise Karmayoga blended with Bhakti; while verse 57 tells us how to practise Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti.

Thus addressed by Arjuna, the Lord cites the diverse views of other thinkers on the subject of Sannyāsa and Tyāga in two verses before expressing His own opinion in the matter.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं सन्न्यासं कवयो विदुः।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः॥ २॥

कवयः (some) sages; काम्यानाम् कर्मणाम् of actions motivated by desires; न्यासम् renunciation; सन्न्यासम् (as) Sannyāsa; विदुः understand; विचक्षणाः (and) other thinkers; सर्वकर्मफलत्यागम् relinquishing the fruit of all actions; त्यागम् (as) Tyāga; प्राहुः declare.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Some sages understand Sannyāsa as the giving up of all actions motivated by desire; and other thinkers declare that Tyāga consists in relinquishing the fruit of all actions. (2)

Particular acts of sacrifice, charity, penance and worship and other noble acts that have been recommended in the Śāstras for the attainment of agreeable objects such as wife, progeny, wealth and an abode in heaven etc., and for getting rid of that which is disagreeable, such as disease and danger etc., are referred to here as 'Kāmyānām Karmaṇām'. The word 'Kāmyānām' further indicates that such acts are optional and not obligatory. That is to say, they may be undertaken if one seeks some return for them; but their omission on the part of those who seek no return will bring no harm to them.

The first half of this verse is intended to show that according to some sages, Sannyāsa consists in merely giving up such optional acts. In the opinion of these sages, Sannyāsīs are those who duly perform only such duties as must be performed daily or require to be performed on special occasions, and have given up the optional acts referred to above.

Devotion to God, worship of other deities, service of one's parents and other elders, sacrifice, charity and penance and vocational duties peculiar to one's grade in society and stage in life and bodily functions such as taking food, drink and so on, and all other duties of an obligatory nature enjoined by the scriptures, the omission of which interferes with morality, religion and tradition are included in 'Sarvakarma'. And 'Sarvakarmaphalatyāga' consists in giving up the desire for all enjoyments of this world as well as of the next, such as wife, progeny, wealth, honour, fame, prestige and heavenly bliss etc., obtained through the performance of such acts, that is to say, in associating no such action with the idea of any reward.

By the latter half of this verse the Lord seeks to convey that, in the eye of those who use their critical faculty in distinguishing the eternal from the evanescent, Tyāga consists in relinquishing the fruit of all actions as indicated above, and performing one's obligatory duties alone; hence they perform all their duties in such a spirit.

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः।
यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे॥ ३॥

एके some; मनीषिणः men of wisdom; इति thus; प्राहुः declare (that); कर्म (all) action; दोषवत् contains some measure of evil; त्याज्यम् (and therefore) worth giving up; च and; अपरे others; इति (say) thus; यज्ञदानतपःकर्म (that) acts of sacrifice, charity and penance; त्याज्यम् न (are) not worth shunning.

Some wise men declare that all actions contain a measure of evil, and are therefore worth giving up; while others say that acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not worth shunning. (3)

By the first half of this verse the Lord seeks to convey that every undertaking invariably gets tainted with sin to some extent, hence even such duties as have been enjoined on us are not wholly free from blemish. It is in order to impress this idea that the Lord Himself says elsewhere in the course of this very chapter that "all undertaking, are involved in sin as fire in smoke (XVIII.48).* Therefore, some men of wisdom declare that the man who seeks blessedness should actually give up all kinds of actions including those that must be performed daily, those that require to be performed on special occasions and those that are motivated by desire, or in other words that he should enter the order to Saṁnyāsa or Renunciation.

According to other wise men however acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not really tainted with blemish. They hold that the sins of violence etc. with which undertakings of all sorts are unavoidably found tainted are really no sins; on the other hand, having been enjoined by the scriptures, they serve to purify the agent. Hence a man seeking beatitude should shun only prohibited acts and should not abstain from duties enjoined by the Śāstras.

Having thus cited the divergent views of men of wisdom on the subject of Sannyāsa and Tyāga, the Lord now proceeds to pronounce His own conclusion on the subject of Tyāga.

निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम।
त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः सम्प्रकीर्तितः॥ ४॥

पुरुषव्याघ्र O tiger among men; भरतसत्तम O best of Bharatas; तत्र of Sannyāsa and Tyāga; त्यागे on the subject of Tyāga (in the first instance); मे My; निश्चयम् conclusion; शृणु hear; हि because; त्यागः Tyāga; त्रिविधः of three kinds (viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika); सम्प्रकीर्तितः has been declared to be.

Of Sannyāsa and Tyāga, first hear My conclusion on the subject of Tyāga, Arjuna; for Tyāga, O tiger among men, has been declared to be of three kinds—Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika. (4)

* सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः।

By addressing Arjuna as 'Bharatasattama' and 'Puruṣavyāghra' the Lord seeks to convey that of the three types of Tyāga going to be discussed by Him in the course of this chapter, he is capable of practising the Sāttvika form of Tyāga, which is only another name for Karmayoga or the Path of Action, and should avoid the other two, viz., the Rājasika and Tāmasika types.

It will be remembered that in the opening verse of this chapter Arjuna requested the Lord to reveal the truth of both Sannyāsa and Tyāga; and of these two, the Lord proceeds in this verse to discuss the Truth of Tyāga in the first instance. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the indeclinable 'Tatra' in this verse. Arjuna requested the Lord to expound the truth of the two separately and the Lord has hinted as His intention to discuss the subject of Tyāga alone without declining his request. This shows that He will discuss the subject of Sannyāsa later on.

The use of the words 'Me Niścayam' in this verse is intended to convey that none of the views so far expressed by Him fully represents His own view, which is now introduced by Him.

By referring to the three types of Tyāga mentioned in the Śāstras the Lord indicates that the view He holds on the subject is supported by the scriptures. This He does in order to show His regard for the scriptures.

Thus calling the attention of Arjuna to His own view on the subject, and in order to reveal the true nature of Tyāga as understood by Him, the Lord first of all gives in two verses His conclusion about the performance of commendable acts enjoined by the scriptures.

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत्।
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम्॥ ५॥

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म acts of sacrifice, charity and penance; न (is) not; त्याज्यम् worth giving up; तत् (on the other hand) that; कार्यम् एव must be performed; यज्ञः (for) sacrifice; दानम् charity; च and; तपः penance; एव all these; मनीषिणाम् of wise men; पावनानि (are) purifiers.

Acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not worth giving up; they must be performed. For sacrifice, charity and penance—all these are purifiers of wise men. (5)

The first half of this verse impresses upon Arjuna the obligatory nature of duties enjoined by the the scriptures. The idea is that the man to whom a particular duty has been assigned by the Śāstras with due regard to his grade in society and stage in life—who has been enjoined to perform sacrifices and penance and bestow gifts at a particular time and in a particular manner—should not shun that duty: in other words, he should not flout the injunctions of the scriptures; for far from yielding any good results, their omission brings the sin of default on one's head. Hence one must perform these duties. The following verse tells us in what spirit they are to be performed.

The word 'Manīṣiṇām' in this verse stands for those wise seekers of liberation who duly and scrupulously perform, in a disinterested spirit and according to the sacred precepts, the duties that have been assigned to them by the scriptures with due regard to their grade in society and stage in life. Instead of causing bondage, the acts of sacrifice, charity and penance performed by them serve to purify their

heart: hence one must perform these acts in a disinterested spirit. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the latter half of this verse.

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम्॥ ६॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; एतानि these (acts of sacrifice, charity and penance); तु as well as; कर्माणि (all other) acts; अपि too; सङ्गम् attachment; च and; फलानि fruits; त्यक्त्वा renouncing; कर्तव्यानि must be performed; इति this (is); मे My; निश्चितम् considered; उत्तमम् (and) supreme; मतम् verdict.

Hence these acts of sacrifice, charity and penance, and all other acts too, must be performed without attachment and hope of reward: this is My considered and supreme verdict, Arjuna. (6)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Etāni' naturally refers to such acts as have been mentioned in the preceding verse viz., sacrifice, charity and penance. And the use of the particles 'Tu' and 'Api' along with 'Etāni' is intended to include the service of elders, such as one's parents etc., vocational duties peculiar to one's grade in society and stage in life, bodily functions such as taking one's food and drink and all other duties enjoined by the Śāstras.

'Saṅgam' means attachment, not only to the action itself, but to its fruit as well; while 'Phalāni' means the desire for fruit in the shape of enjoyments, of this world as well as of the next, that may be obtained from those acts. 'Saṅgam tyaktvā phalāni ca' may also be taken to mean that a seeker of liberation should abstain from prohibited acts as well as from acts which are motivated by desire.

The words "Iti Me niścitam matam-uttamam" signify that such is the Lord's own conception of Tyāga. That is to say, in the opinion of the Lord, Tyāga consists in performing one's allotted duties without attachment and without any hope of reward; for he who performs his duties in the aforesaid manner is freed from the bondage of actions and attains the supreme state. He ceases to have anything to do with his actions.

Now let us examine the views of other sages referred to by the Lord as well as that of the Lord Himself on their own merits and see for ourselves how the Lord's own view is decidedly superior to the other views. It will thus be seen that the definitions of Tyāga and Sannyāsa as pronounced by other sages are far from ideal or perfect. For, even if one actually abstains from actions which are motivated by desire, other actions of an obligatory or occasional type will lead to bondage if one continues to entertain a feeling of mineness, attachment and desire with regard to those actions and their fruit. Even if one gives up the desire for the fruit of all actions, they may lead to bondage if one continues to entertain the feeling of mineness and attachment with respect to them. Without renouncing the feeling of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and desire we cannot be freed from the bondage of actions even if we shun our obligatory duties, regarding all action as containing some measure of evil; for by doing so we incur the sin of neglecting a prescribed duty. Even so, acts of sacrifice, charity and penance will lead to bondage if one continues to perform them without renouncing attachment and the desire for their fruit. Therefore, Sannyāsa and Tyāga

as defined by those sages cannot secure complete freedom from the bondage of actions. Complete renunciation or Tyāga consists in renouncing the feeling of mineness and attachment in respect of all one's actions, as well as the desire for their fruit, as advised by the Lord. By doing so one secures complete freedom from the bondage of actions. For action in itself is not conducive to bondage; it is the feeling of mineness and attachment with respect to it and the desire for its fruit that lead to bondage. Herein lies the superiority of the Lord's view over the views of others.

Thus expressing His considered opinion in the matter, the Lord now defines in an ascending order the three types of Tyāga in the following three verses, and begins with the marks of the Tāmasika type His object in doing so is to point out that of the three types of Tyāga mentioned in the scriptures, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, the Sāttvika type alone is real Tyāga and worth practising, while the other two types of Tyāga are no Tyāga in the real sense of the term and are not worth practising, as well as to show that His view is in complete accord with the Śāstras.

नियतस्य तु सन्न्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते।
मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ ७ ॥

तु but; नियतस्य कर्मणः of a prescribed duty; सन्न्यासः (actual) renunciation; न not; उपपद्यते is advisable; मोहात् through ignorance; तस्य its; परित्यागः abandonment; तामसः Tāmasika in character; परिकीर्तितः has been declared.

(Prohibited acts and those that are motivated by desire should no doubt be given up). But it is not advisable to abandon a prescribed duty. Its abandonment through ignorance has been declared as Tāmasika. (7)

Sacrifice, charity, penance, study and teaching, giving religious discourses, warfare, governance of the people, rearing of cattle, agriculture, trade service, eating and drinking and all other duties that have been enjoined by the Śāstras as binding on a particular man with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, are 'Niyata Karma' for him. He who actually gives up these duties fails to discharge his obligation and thereby incurs sin; for such neglect of duty causes a brake in the continuity of action and brings about a chaos in the whole world (III.23-24). Hence it is not advisable to abandon one's allotted duties.

The Tyāga or renunciation on the part of him who gives up his allotted duty, erroneously taking such renunciation to be a means to liberation, is inspired by Tamas inasmuch as it is actuated by ignorance; for Moha or ignorance has been declared to be a product of Tamoguṇa (XIV.13,17). And it has been pointed out by the Lord that men possessing a Tāmasika disposition fall in the scale of spiritual evolution (XIV.18). Hence the form of renunciation referred to above is not such as enables one to secure freedom from the bondage of Karma. On the other hand, it brings about one's downfall inasmuch as it involves one in the sin accruing from neglect of duty.

Having characterized the Tāmasika form of Tyāga, the Lord now defines Rājasika Tyāga.

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत्।
स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत्॥ ८॥

यत् whatever; कर्म action (is done); दुःखम् (is) of the nature of discomfort; एव indeed; इति so (thinking); कायक्लेशभयात् for fear of physical strain; त्यजेत् should anyone give up (his duties); सः he; राजसम् त्यागम् (such) Rājasika form of renunciation; कृत्वा practising; त्यागफलम् the fruit of renunciation; न एव in no case; लभेत् reaps.

Should anyone give up his duties for fear of physical strain, thinking that all action is verily of the nature of discomfort,—practising such Rājasika form of renunciation, he reaps not the fruit of renunciation. (8)

The word 'Karma', qualified by the relative adjective 'Yat', covers all actions enjoined by the scriptures and mentioned in the commentary on verse 7 above. The performance of these actions involves exertion of one's mind, senses and body; nay, in course of it one is faced with many obstacles; one is required to collect a lot of materials, to forgo bodily comforts and suffer hardships by undertaking sacred vows and fasts, and to observe many restriction of various kinds. Thinking thus, he who gives up actions enjoined by the scriptures, such as sacrifice, charity and penance etc., in order to avoid exertion of mind, senses and body and to enjoy relaxation is said to abandon his duties for fear of physical strain.

The latter half of this verse shows that he who gives up his allotted duties and enters the order of Sannyāsa with such feelings, practises what they call the Rājasika form of renunciation; for attachment to the relaxation of mind, senses and body is an offspring of Rajoguṇa. Hence he who practises this form of renunciation fails to reap the fruit of true renunciation, viz., freedom from the shackles of Karma and realization of God; for so long as there is the feeling of mineness and attachment in respect of one's mind, senses and body one can never be freed from the bondage of actions. Hence this Rājasika form of renunciation is no renunciation in the true acceptation of the term, it is renunciation only in name. Therefore, seekers of beatitude should not practise such renunciation. Far from reaping the fruit of true renunciation, he who practises this form of renunciation is liable to incur the sin accruing from neglect of one's allotted duties.

The Lord now defines the Sāttvika, which is the best, type of Tyāga.

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन।
सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः॥ ९॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; यत् नियतं कर्म a prescribed duty which; कार्यम् it must be performed; इति with this idea; एव alone; सङ्गम् attachment; च and; फलम् the fruit; त्यक्त्वा renouncing; क्रियते is performed; सः that; त्यागः renunciation; एव alone; सात्त्विकः of the Sāttvika type; मतः has been recognized (to be).

A prescribed duty which is performed simply because it has to be performed, giving up attachment and fruit, that alone has been recognized as the Sāttvika form of renunciation. (9)

The word 'Karma', qualified by the adjective 'Niyatam', in this verse covers all those duties which have been prescribed by the Śāstras as binding on a particular man with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, and which have been discussed in the commentary on verse 6 above. This should also be taken to mean that prohibited acts and those which are motivated by desire are not included in the category of 'Niyata Karma'.

By speaking of Karmayoga, which consists in the active performance of duty, as the Sāttvika form or renunciation the Lord shows that according to Him true renunciation lies, not in renouncing one's duties of an obligatory nature enjoined by the Śāstras, but in totally giving up attachment and desire for those actions, as well as for all objects obtained as a result of such actions: giving up one's allotted duties for any reason whatsoever without renouncing attachment and desire for the enjoyments of this world as well as of the next, obtained as a result of those actions, is no true renunciation. For renunciation should result in the non-recognition of any connection with actions; and this consummation could be reached only by renouncing the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire, and not merely by giving up one's duties. Therefore, Sāttvika Tyāga consists in renouncing attachment and desire for the fruit of all actions.

It may be asked here: What is the idea of the man practising the Sāttvika form of renunciation in shunning prohibited acts and those that are motivated by desire, and in performing duties of an obligatory nature ? Anticipating this query, the Lord gives below the characteristics of the final stage reached by the man practising the Sāttvika form of renunciation.

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते।
त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः॥ १०॥

अकुशलम् कर्म action which does not bring lasting happiness; न not; द्वेष्टि (he who) hates; कुशले to that which is conducive to blessedness; न nor; अनुषज्जते gets attached; सत्त्वसमाविष्टः (that man) imbued with the quality of Sāttvika (goodness); छिन्नसंशयः he whose doubts have been resolved; मेधावी intelligent; त्यागी (and) a man of true renunciation.

He who neither hates action which does not bring lasting happiness, nor does he get attached to that which is conducive to blessedness,—imbued with the quality of goodness, he has all his doubts resolved, is intelligent and a man of true renunciation. (10)

The word 'Karma', qualified by the adjective 'Akuśalam', in this verse stands for sinful acts prohibited by the Śāstras, as well as for those that are motivated by desire; for, while sinful acts cause one's birth in sub-human species of various kinds and throw one into the infernal regions, actions, motivated by desire too bring about rebirth in order to enable one to reap their fruit. Being thus conducive to bondage, both these types of action are called 'Akuśala'. The man who practises the Sāttvika form of renunciation is entirely free from likes and dislikes; hence the shunning of prohibited and desire-born acts on his part is not actuated by hatred. He shuns them in the interest of the world order and with a recognition of the fact that it is his duty of shun acts which are not conducive to

lasting good. This is what is meant by words 'Na dveṣṭi akuśalam Karma.'

'Kuśale' denotes virtuous acts of the obligatory and occasional types enjoined by the scriptures, e.g., sacrifice, charity and austerity etc., and all other duties consistent with one's grade in society and stage in life. Performed in a disinterested spirit, these actions are capable of wiping out man's accumulated sins of previous lives and freeing him from the bondage of actions; hence they are spoken of as 'Kuśala' (conducive to one's lasting good). The words "Kuśale na anuṣajjate", therefore, mean that the performance of such noble acts on the part of the man of Sāttvika renunciation is not actuated by attachment; he performs them for the maintenance of the world-order, renouncing the feeling of mineness, attachment and the desire for fruit, and with a sense of duty.

The man of a Sāttvika disposition who performs or shuns actions with a sense of duty and without any partiality or prejudice is convinced that the Sāttvika Tyāga in the form of Karmayoga is the only perfect means of securing freedom from the bondage of actions and attaining the supreme state. This is what is meant by the adjective 'Chinnasaṁśayaḥ'.

In the above verse the man of renunciation of the Sāttvika type, i.e., the Karmayogī performing his duties in a disinterested spirit, has been called a man of true renunciation. This raises the following question. The man who abstains from all sorts of action, as from those that are prohibited or motivated by desire, can as well be a man of true renunciation; how, then, does the Lord declare him alone who performs actions in a disinterested spirit as a man of true renunciation ? Anticipating this query, the Lord says:—

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते॥ ११॥

हि because; देहभृता by anyone possessing a body; अशेषतः in their entirety; कर्माणि (all) actions; त्यक्तुम् न शक्यम् cannot be given up; यः who; कर्मफलत्यागी renounces the fruit of actions; सः he; तु alone; त्यागी a man of renunciation; इति so; अभिधीयते is called.

Since all actions cannot be given up in their entirety by anyone possessing a body, he alone who renounces the fruit of actions is called a man of renunciation. (11)

The word 'Dehabhṛtā' covers all human beings who maintain and nourish their body. The first half of this verse is, therefore, intended to convey that no human being can remain inactive; for without action it is not possible even to maintain one's body (III.8). Therefore, to whatever Āśrama or stage in life a man belongs, so long as he is alive, he must satisfy his hunger and thirst, keep his body either in a sitting or a lying posture, stir and move about, speak and do other things according to his circumstances. Hence it is not possible to give up all actions in their entirety.

The compound word 'Karmaphalatyāgī' stands for the Karmayogī who performs duties enjoined by the Śāstras, renouncing the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire. Since everybody must do something, none can remain inactive. A man of true renunciation is he who totally abstains from prohibited actions and those that are motivated by desire and performs duties enjoined by the Śāstras according to the needs of the occasion, completely renouncing the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire in respect of those actions as well as for their fruit. This is what is meant

by the latter half of this verse.

He who dwells with his mind on the objects of the world, outwardly restraining the functions of the senses, is no man of renunciation; and even so he who gives up duties enjoined by the Śāstras such as sacrifice, charity and austerity etc., even though attachment and the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' are present in him, is no Tyāgī either.

In the above verse it has been stated that a man of renunciation is he who renounces the fruit of actions. Here it may be urged that even though one may not expect any return for one's actions, the latter cannot be undone without yielding their fruit; just as a seed sown in the soil automatically gives birth to a tree in course of time, even so the fruit of actions once performed must be reaped by all in one life or another. Such being the case, how can one be a Tyāgī i.e., 'free from the bondage of actions' by merely renouncing the fruit of actions ? In order to meet this objection the Lord says:—

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम्।
भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु सन्न्यासिनां क्वचित्॥ १२॥

अत्यागिनाम् कर्मणः of the actions of the unrenouncing; इष्टम् welcome; अनिष्टम् unwelcome; च and; मिश्रम् mixed; त्रिविधम् threefold, of three kinds; फलम् the fruit; प्रेत्य hereafter, after death; भवति does accrue; तु but; सन्न्यासिनाम् (of the actions) of those who have renounced; क्वचित् न (accrues) at no time.

Welcome, unwelcome and mixed—threefold, indeed, is the fruit that accrues hereafter from the actions of the unrenouncing. But there is none ever for those who have renounced. (12)

The word 'Atyāginām' refers to the generality of those common folk who have not renounced the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire in respect of actions performed by them and their fruit, that is to say, who perform all their actions with attachment and with a hope of reward.

Heavenly bliss or any other agreeable enjoyments of the terrestrial plane, attained as a result of various acts performed by such men, constitute what is known as the welcome fruit; and birth in subhuman species such as beasts, birds, insects, moths and trees etc., tortures in hell or sufferings of any other kind brought about by their sinful deeds are spoken of as the unwelcome fruit. Even so, being born as a human being, he who obtains welcome enjoyments now and undergoes unwelcome experiences at another time is said to reap a mixed fruit. This is the threefold fruit yielded by one's actions.

The actions performed, by these unrenouncing men cannot be neutralized until they have borne fruit, and continue to yield their welcome or unwelcome fruit life after life; that is why such men go on revolving with the cycle of births and deaths.

In his current life man generally reaps his 'Prārabdha' or destiny carved out of his doings in previous lives; the fruit of his current actions is seldom reaped in this life. Therefore, the fruit of actions performed in course of one human life is bound to be reaped in many lives. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the word 'Pretya'.

The particle 'Tu' is intended to distinguish those that have renounced the fruit from the unrenouncing, and establish

their superiority over the latter.

The word 'Sannyāsinām' in this verse stands for those Karmayogīs who have completely renounced the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire in respect of actions and their fruit, who have been referred to under the name of 'Tyāgī' in verse 10 above, and termed both as a 'Sannyāsī' and 'Yogī' in the opening verse of Chapter VI, and who are shown in verse 51 of Chapter II to attain the supreme blissful state.

Whatever actions are performed by such men of renunciation are like fried seeds; they are incapable of bearing fruit. And such disinterested actions performed for the sake of sacrifice also neutralize all good and evil actions performed in previous lives (IV.23). Hence none of their actions performed in this life or in lives that have gone by ever yield any fruit either here or hereafter, under any circumstances; they are completely rid of the bondage of actions.

In the opening verse of this chapter Arjuna requested the Lord to expound the truth of Sannyāsa and Tyāga separately. In response to this prayer the Lord stated in verses 2 and 3 the diverse views of different sages on this question and explained at full length the truth of Tyāga or Karmayoga as understood by Him in verses 4 to 12. Now, in order to expound the truth of Sannyāsa or Sāṅkhyayoga, the Lord first of all mentions five factors contributory to the accomplishment of actions from the Sāṅkhya point of view.

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे।
साङ्ख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम्॥ १३॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed one, Arjuna; सर्वकर्मणाम् सिद्धये towards the accomplishment of all actions; एतानि these, the following; पञ्च five; कारणानि factors or contributory causes; कृतान्ते prescribing means for neutralizing all actions; साङ्ख्ये in the branch of learning known by the name of Sāṅkhya; प्रोक्तानि have been mentioned; मे from Me; निबोध know (them).

In the branch of learning known by the name of Sāṅkhya, which prescribes means for neutralizing all actions, these five factors have been mentioned as contributory to the accomplishment of all actions; know them from Me, Arjuna. (13)

The compound word 'Sarvakarmaṇām' in this verse covers all actions, whether they are enjoined by the Śāstras or prohibited by them.

'Sāṅkhya' means knowledge. The word has been derived from the root 'Khyā' (to know) with 'Sam' prefixed to it. It is etymologically explained as under: सम्यक् ख्यायते ज्ञायते परमात्मा अनेन इति साङ्ख्यं तत्त्वज्ञानम् ('Sāṅkhya' is the means of knowing God in reality; hence it means true wisdom.) Therefore, the word 'Sāṅkhye' qualified, by the adjective 'Kṛtānte', refers to that branch of knowledge which teaches Jñānayoga or the means of true Knowledge, and which tells us the process of neutralizing all actions, viz., viewing all actions as being performed by Prakṛti or Nature and the Self as wholly Non-doer. The five factors declared as contributory to the accomplishment of all actions—which conjointly operate to produce an action—are also intended to establish the non-doership of the Self.

The Lord now enumerates the five factors:—

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम्।
विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम्॥ १४॥

अत्र in the matter, i.e., operating towards the accomplishment of actions; अधिष्ठानम् the seat (of action); तथा and; कर्ता the agent; च and; पृथग्विधम् of different kinds; करणम् the organs; च and; विविधाः of various kinds; पृथक् चेष्टाः separate movements; च and; एव likewise; पञ्चमम् the fifth (is); दैवम् destiny.

The following are the factors operating towards the accomplishment of actions, viz., the seat of action and the agent, the organs of different kinds and the separate movements of divergent types; and the fifth is Daiva or destiny. (14)

The word 'Adhiṣṭhānam' in this verse primarily denotes the seat of activity, as well as of the organs, viz., the body; while in the secondary sense it can also be taken to refer to the earth's surface, which serves as the ground on which various actions forming part of a sacrifice are performed.

The word 'Kartā' (agent) stands for the soul as rooted in Matter. It is this very soul that has been spoken of as the enjoyer in verse 21 of Chapter XIII and as one deluded by egotism, in verse 27 of Chapter III.

Mind, intellect and the ego are internal organs; while the five senses of perception and the five organs of action—these ten are the external instruments. Besides these, the ladle etc., which are helpful in the performance of a sacrifice etc., are all included in the external instruments. Even so whatever diverse media or accessories are employed for the performance of various-actions are covered by the words "Pṛthagvidham Karaṇam".

Moving from one place to another, exerting one's hands, feet and other limbs, the acts of inhalation and exhalation, drawing together and stretching one's limbs, closing and opening one's eyes and indulging in speculations of various kinds—these and other activities of divergent types are what have been spoken of here as "Vividhāḥ pṛthak ceṣṭāḥ".

The word 'Daivam' in this verse stands for the latencies of past actions, both good and evil; 'Prārabdha' or destiny is also included in it. Many people call it Adṛṣta or the unseen destiny. The adjective 'Pañcamam' has been added to it in order to show that this completes the number, viz., five.

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः।
न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः॥ १५॥

नरः man; शरीरवाङ्मनोभिः with the mind, speech and body; न्याय्यम् right; वा or; विपरीतम् otherwise; वा even; यत् whatever; कर्म action; प्रारभते undertakes, performs; तस्य thereof; एते these; पञ्च five; हेतवः (are) the contributory causes.

These five are the contributory causes of whatever actions, right or wrong, man performs with the mind, speech and body. (15)

The use of word 'Naraḥ' in this verse is intended to convey that it is in the human body alone that the soul is free to perform fresh actions of a virtuous or sinful type. All

other species of life are meant for pleasurable and painful experiences alone; in them one has to reap the consequences of one's past actions and is denied freedom of will.

The word 'Śarīra' forming part of the compound word 'Sarīravāṅmanobhiḥ' stands for the physical body including the senses, while 'Manas' covers all the aspects of the mind or the internal organ.

Sacrifice, charity, austerity, study, warfare, agriculture, rearing of cows, trade service and all other duties enjoined by the Śāstras as binding on a man according to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, and performed in a righteous manner, are covered by the adjective 'Nyāyyam'.

Similarly, acts which have been forbidden by the Śāstras for some classes of men in view of their grade in society etc., and all other sinful acts which run counter to the principles of morality and religion, such as lying, thieving, adultery, violence, drinking, and taking prohibited food, belong to the category of unrighteous acts.

The words 'Karma', qualified by the relative adjective 'Yat', covers all actions, both good and evil, the fruits of which have to be reaped here or hereafter. None of these actions can be accomplished without the joint operation of the above five factors. The co-operation of all these is essential for the performance of any action whatsoever. If any of these five is missing, no action can be possible. That is why it has been stated in verse 17 below that action which is performed without any conscious agent is no action at all.

Having thus enumerated the five factors, Adhiṣṭhāna etc., contributory to the accomplishment of all actions according to the Sāṅkhya point of view, the Lord now first denounces those who recognize the Self as the doer. This He does in order to impress upon Arjuna that, really speaking, the Self has nothing to do with actions and that it is absolutely untainted, immutable and a non-doer.

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः।
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः॥ १६॥

तु but; एवं सति notwithstanding this; यः who; अकृतबुद्धित्वात् owing to an impure intellect; तत्र in that matter, i.e., towards the accomplishment of actions; केवलम् आत्मानम् the absolute (untainted) Self; कर्तारम् as the doer; पश्यति views; सः that; दुर्मतिः man of perverse understanding; न not; पश्यति views (aright).

Notwithstanding this, however, he who, having an impure mind, regards the absolute, taintless Self alone as the doer, that man of perverse understanding does not view aright. (16)

As has been shown in the preceding verses, it is the five factors mentioned above, viz., Adhiṣṭhāna etc., that contribute to the accomplishment of all actions; the Self has really nothing to do with them. Hence it is quite absurd to regard the Self as the doer. Nevertheless, people foolishly arrogate to themselves the doership of actions; how strange is that ! This is what is sought to be conveyed by the words 'Evam Sati'.

The ignorant man of the world, whose intellect has not been purified through association with holy men and the study of scriptures, and through spiritual practices such as discrimination, reflection and control of mind and body etc. is referred to here as 'Akṛtabuddhi'. The use of the ablative

form 'Akṛtabuddhitvāt' is intended to show why people regard the Self as the doer. The idea is that even though, really speaking, the Self has nothing to do with actions, yet, through lack of discrimination man ignorantly embraces the belief that the Self is the doer.

The adjective 'Kevalam' used with reference to 'Ātmānam', is intended to reveal the true character of the Self, which is 'absolute', *i.e.*, absolutely pure, immutable and unattached. Śrutis also proclaim that "the Self is, really speaking, altogether unattached."* (*Bṛhad., up.*, IV.iii.15-16). Hence it is quite preposterous to connect the Self, which is unattached, with actions and regard it as the doer.

The word 'Durmatiḥ' has been used to reveal that the reason of the man who views the Self as the doer is perverted, that he lacks the capacity to realize the essential character of the Self. The truly discerning man is he who views all actions as a game of Prakṛti and the Self as a non-doer in every sense, as declared in verse 29 of Chapter XIII. As against this, he who regards the Self as the doer is deluded by ignorance and egotism (III.27); hence his view is not correct but erroneous.

Here it will be seen that of the five factors declared as contributory to the accomplishment of actions, four are products of Prakṛti, while the fifth, viz., the agent, is no other than the Self rooted in Prakṛti. In the above exposition however, it is stated that the Self is not the doer, but unattac[hed]. How are we to reconcile these two se[emingly] contradictory statements ? In this connectio[n] it should be noted that, really speaking, the Self is eternal, pure, enlightened, immutable and wholly unattached; it has nothing to do with Prakṛti, objects born of Prakṛti, or actions. But due to nescience, that has existed from time without beginning, the unattached Self has been connected as it were with Prakṛti; therefore, falsely identifying itself with the acts performed by Prakṛti, it arrogates to itself the doership of those actions. The Self which thus claims to be the doer is known as 'Prakṛtistha Puruṣa' (self rooted in Prakṛti); it is only when it arrogates to itself the doership of actions that they are known by the name of 'Karma' and bear fruit. That is why the Prakṛtistha Puruṣa has to take birth in good and evil wombs and to reap the consequences of those actions (XIII.21). Therefore, the 'Kartā' or agent, mentioned in verse 14 above as one of the five factors contributory to the accomplishment of actions, is the Prakṛtistha Puruṣa; whereas the present verse speaks of the absolute, i.e. unattached and untainted Self. Hence by declaring it as the non-doer the Lord has stated its real character. The fifth factor, viz., the agent, is no longer present in the actions of the man who has realized the true nature of the Self. That is why his actions cease to be known as 'Karma'. It is this very idea that has been brought out in the next verse.

Denouncing the man who views the Self as the doer, in order to inculcate the truth that the Self is absolutely untainted, immutable and a non-doer, the Lord now extols him who, having realized the true nature of the Self, views it as a non-doer.

यस्य नाहङ्कृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते।
हत्वापि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते॥ १७॥

यस्य in whose mind; अहङ्कृतः भावः the notion that "I am the doer"; न does not exist; यस्य

---

* असङ्गो ह्ययं पुरुषः।

whose; बुद्धिः reason; न not; लिप्यते is tainted (by thoughts of mundane objects and activities); सः he; इमान् all (these); लोकान् creatures; हत्वा having slaughtered; अपि even; न neither; हन्ति (really) kills; न nor; निबध्यते is bound (by sin).

He whose mind is free from the sense of doership, and whose reason is not tainted by worldly objects and activities, does not really slay, even having slaughtered all these creatures, nor is bound by sin. (17)

The relative pronoun 'Yasya' in this verse refers to the Sāṅkhyayogī (the Sādhaka treading the path of Knowledge) who views all actions as a game of Prakṛti. No longer regarding the body as his self, such a man altogether ceases to be the doer. That is to say, he no longer entertains to the least degree the sense of doership or duty in respect of any action whatsoever performed by the mind, senses and the body. This is what is meant by the words 'Na Ahaṅkṛtaḥ Bhāvaḥ'.

The Sāṅkhyayogī further ceases to entertain the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire in respect of actions and their fruit in the shape of wife, progeny, wealth, house, honour, fame, heavenly bliss and other objects of this world and the next. He disclaims connection with any action whatsoever or its fruit; and inasmuch as he comes to realize all actions and objects as momentary, perishable and unreal like the actions and enjoyments of a dream, they hardly leave any impression on his mind. This is what is meant by the clause 'Buddhiḥ na lipyate'.

Thus it is clear that, inasmuch as the Sāṅkhyayogī comes to realize in the aforesaid manner the essential character of the Self, egotism or the feeling of 'I', which is born of ignorance, entirely disappears from his mind; and since he no longer entertains the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' in respect of the mind, intellect, senses and body, he ceases to have the least connection with the actions performed by them or with the fruit of those actions. It, therefore, follows that the actions that are performed by his mind, intellect and senses in the interest of the world-order and due to the impulse of his Prārabdha or destiny are all in accord with the Śāstras, and beneficent to all. For the feeling of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and selfishness having disappeared, there remains no incentive to the perpetration of sinful acts. Therefore, just as when any living being meets its death due to its Prārabdha or destiny through the agency of fire, air and water etc., neither are the latter held responsible for the death of that living being nor are they bound by that action, even so the exalted soul mentioned above, while discharging his sacred obligations in the eyes of the world, is not held responsible for his deeds nor gets bound by their fruit even if he carries out the hard-hearted duties of a Kṣatriya—exterminates the whole creation according to the exigencies of the moment—much less when he performs noble acts such as sacrifice, charity and austerity. That is to say, even though he performs all sorts of actions, he remains absolutely free from their binding effect.

The idea is that just as God, even though carrying on the functions of creation, maintenance and destruction etc. of the whole universe, is really speaking not the doer in respect of these functions (IV.13), and has nothing to do with them (IV.14; IX.9), even so the Sāṅkhyayogī has no connection whatsoever with the actions performed by his mind, intellect and senses. Of course, since he has attained utmost purity of heart and has become entirely free

from the feelings of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and selfishness, his mind, intellect and senses are incapable of entertaining likes and dislikes, as well as of sinful acts such as thieving, adultery, lying, violence, duplicity, hypocrisy etc.; all his activities are in accord with the Śāstras and in keeping with his grade in society, stage in life and circumstances. And this imposes no strain on him inasmuch as it becomes a habit with him.

Having thus established the non-doership of the Self in order to expound the truth of Sannyāsa (Sāṅkhyayoga), the Lord now enumerates the factors which motivate action as well as the constituents of action in order to give a clear idea of the constituents of action from the point of view of Sāṅkhyayoga.

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना।
करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसङ्ग्रहः॥ १८॥

परिज्ञाता the knower (the subject); **ज्ञानम्** knowledge; **ज्ञेयम्** (and) the object of knowledge; **त्रिविधा** threefold; **कर्मचोदना** (is) that which motivates action; **कर्ता** (even so) the doer; **करणम्** the organs; **कर्म** (and) action; **इति** thus; **त्रिविधः** of three kinds; **कर्मसङ्ग्रहः** (are) the constituents of action.

The knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge—these three motivate action. Even so the doer, the organs and activity—these are the three constituents of action. (18)

'Parijñātā' or the knower is he who ascertains the essential character of an object; the faculty of mind by which he does so is called 'Jñāna' or knowledge and the object whose essential character he ascertains is called 'Jñeya'. These three, taken together, motivate action; in other words, these three goad man to action. For it is only when a qualified man concludes with his cognitive faculty that he has to perform such and such action in such and such manner with the help of such and such materials, that he feels impelled to act.

The soul rooted in Prakṛti, who performs the acts of perceiving, hearing, grasping with the mind, recollecting, eating, drinking and all other functions is called 'Kartā' or the agent; the mind, intellect and the senses with the instrumentality of which he carries on all these functions are known by the name of 'Karaṇa' and all these functions are spoken of as 'Karma'. It is these three factors which combine to produce an action. For 'Karma' is accomplished only when man himself assumes the role of an agent and performs an action with the instrumentality of the mind, intellect and senses; no Karma is possible without this. Of the five factors mentioned in verse 14 above as contributory to the accomplishment of actions, the middle three, excluding Adhiṣṭhāna and Daiva, have been given the name of Karmasaṅgraha (constituents of action); for of the five factors these three are the foremost.

Having thus enumerated the three factors which motivate action as well as the three constituents of action from the Sāṅkhya point of view, the Lord now picks up, from among these six Jñāna, Karma and Kartā and undertakes to classify them in their order of sequence under three heads, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, in order that one may choose the Sāttvika traits, which are helpful to the realization of Truth, and reject the Rājasika and Tāmasika, which are prejudicial to it.

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः।
प्रोच्यते गुणसङ्ख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि॥ १९॥

गुणसङ्ख्याने in the branch of knowledge which deals with the Guṇas; ज्ञानम् knowledge; च and; कर्म action; च as well as; कर्ता the doer; गुणभेदतः due to difference of qualities; त्रिधा of three kinds; एव only; प्रोच्यते has been declared; तानि them; अपि too; यथावत् duly; शृणु hear (from Me).

In the branch of knowledge dealing with the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti, knowledge and action as well as the doer have been declared to be of three kinds according to the Guṇa which predominates in each; hear them too duly from Me. (19)

The branch of knowledge which classifies all objects under different heads according as Sattva, Rajas or Tamas preponderates in them is referred to here as 'Guṇasaṅkhyāne'. By inviting Arjuna to hear the threefold division of Jñāna, Karma and Kartā based on the predominance of the three Guṇas, the Lord shows His regard for that branch of knowledge.

It should be noted in this connection that the knower and the doer are not two separate entities; that is why the Lord has omitted to classify the knower separately. And the threefold division of 'Karaṇa' or the organs will follow under the names of Buddhi (reason) and Dhṛti (firmness), and that of the object of knowledge under the name of Sukha. That is the reason why the Lord has indicated His intention here to classify in the first instance only three out of the six factors mentioned in the preceding verse.

As the Lord had undertaken to classify in their order of sequence Jñāna, Karma and Kartā, the Lord now begins with a definition of the Sāttvika type of Jñāna.

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम्॥ २०॥

येन by which (knowledge); विभक्तेषु सर्वभूतेषु in all beings taken severally; एकम् one; अव्ययम् imperishable; भावम् (divine) existence; अविभक्तम् undivided, uniformly present; ईक्षते (man) perceives; तत् that; ज्ञानम् knowledge; सात्त्विकम् Sāttvika; विद्धि Know.

That by which man perceives one imperishable divine existence as undivided and equally present in all individual beings, know that knowledge to be Sāttvika. (20)

The relative pronoun 'Yena' in this verse stands for that realization, following from the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga, which has been referred to in VI.29 and XIII.27. And just as the man who knows the truth about ether, perceives the same ether in a jar, a house, a cave, in the celestial plane as well as in the nether world, nay, in the whole universe including all objects, even so he who views all living beings, appearing as distinct from one another in the eyes of the world, as well as his own self as no other than God Himself, is said to perceive one divine existence as undivided among

individual beings.

By calling this realization as Sāttvika the Lord intends to convey that such knowledge is the only real knowledge, while all other worldly knowledge is only nominal and not real, so that a man who seeks blessedness should strive to acquire this knowledge alone.

The Lord now proceeds to define Rājasika knowledge.

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान्।
वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम्॥ २१॥

तु but; यत् ज्ञानम् the knowledge which; सर्वेषु भूतेषु in all beings; पृथग्विधान् of diverse kinds; नानाभावान् manifold existences; पृथक्त्वेन as apart from one another; वेत्ति cognizes; तत् that; ज्ञानम् knowledge; राजसम् Rājasika; विद्धि know.

That, however, by which man cognizes many existences of various kinds as apart from one another in all beings, know that knowledge to be Rājasika. (21)

The man referred to in the present verse believes that there are as many souls as there are bodies, one in each, and that they are all distinct from one another, even as every living being has a distinct shape and form and a temperament peculiarly its own. This is what is meant by cognizing manifold existences of various kinds as apart from one another in all beings.

The idea is that the man who has no knowledge of the truth about ether thinks that each jar or house has its own limited ether and associating it with the agreeable or foul smell existing therein regards each tract of ether as apart from another. This belief of his is, however, erroneous. Even so the belief that there are as many souls as there are bodies, each in one, is misleading. This is what is meant by calling this knowledge as Rājasika. Rājasika knowledge is no real knowledge, it is knowledge only in name.

The Lord now defines Tāmasika knowledge.

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम्।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्॥ २२॥

तु but; यत् (the knowledge) which; एकस्मिन् कार्ये to one (body, which is an) effect; कृत्स्नवत् as if it were the whole; सक्तम् clings; अहैतुकम् (and is) irrational; अतत्त्वार्थवत् without any real object; च and; अल्पम् trivial, or of little value; तत् that; तामसम् Tāmasika; उदाहृतम् has been spoken of as.

Again, that knowledge which clings to one body as if it were the whole, and which is irrational, has no real object and is trivial, has been declared as Tāmasika. (22)

The particle 'Tu' in this verse is intended to convey that this knowledge is of a much lower order than the Sāttvika and Rājasika types of knowledge defined in the preceding verses.

The first half of this verse represents the main characteristic of Tāmasika knowledge. The idea is that the perverted knowledge through which man comes to regard the body, which is an evolute of

matter, as his own Self and, clinging to this belief, remains attached to his ephemeral and perishable body as his all, that is to say, identifies himself with its joys and sorrows and looks upon its destruction as his utter ruin, and fails to recognize the Self as distinct from the body or all-pervading, is no knowledge in the real acceptation of the term. Hence the Lord has not even mentioned the word 'Jñāna' in this verse; for this perverted form of knowledge is really the same as ignorance.

The use of the adjective 'Ahaitukam' (irrational) with this reference to this knowledge is intended to convey that a reasonable man will hardly entertain such a view; even a man of small understanding is able to distinguish between the material body and the conscious Self by exercising his judgment; hence such a perverted knowledge cannot exist where there is reason and a critical sense.

That which is perceived or apprehended through this knowledge is not real; that is to say, this knowledge does not represent an object in its real character. Hence it is perverted form of knowledge and very insignificant; that is why it is worth discarding. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the adjective 'Atattvārthavat' and 'Alpam'.

Such is the perverted form of knowledge or belief entertained by men of a grossly Tāmasika disposition. That is but natural to them inasmuch as ignorance has been said to be an offspring of Tamoguṇa.

The Lord now characterizes Sāttvika action.

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम्।
अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते॥ २३॥

यत् कर्म the action which; **नियतम्** is ordained (by the scriptures); **सङ्गरहितम्** is not accompanied with the sense of doership; **अफलप्रेप्सुना** by him who seeks no return; **अरागद्वेषतः** without any partiality or prejudice; **कृतम्** has been done; **तत्** that; **सात्त्विकम्** Sāttvika; **उच्यते** is called.

That action which is ordained by the scriptures and is not accompanied by the sense of doership, and has been done without any partiality or prejudice by one who seeks no return, is called Sāttvika. (23)

Sacrifice, charity and austerity, vocational duties and bodily functions and all other noble acts enjoined by the scriptures as binding on a particular man with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, are referred to here as 'Niyatam Karma'. The use of the participial adjective 'Niyatam' is intended to convey that only such obligatory duties as have been enjoined by the scriptures, and are required to be performed either daily or on special occasions, can be Sāttvika in character; those that have been prohibited or are motivated by desire cannot belong to this category.

The noun 'Saṅga', forming part of the compound adjective 'Saṅgarahitam', has not been used in the sense of attachment in this verse; for absence of attachment has been included in the phrase 'Arāgadveṣataḥ Kṛtam'. The word 'Saṅga' should therefore, be interpreted to mean the feeling of identification that one develops with regard to one's actions by claiming their doership. Hence 'Saṅgarahitam' should be taken to refer to such actions as are performed without the

sense of doership and without identifying oneself with one's body. Hence the use of this adjective is intended to show that even the aforesaid duties that have been enjoined by the Śāstras are Sāttvika only when they are 'Saṅgarahita', and not otherwise.

The compound adjective 'Aphalaprepsunā, stands for the unselfish man who, having ceased to entertain the feeling of mineness and attachment in respect of all enjoyments of this world and the next, obtained as a reward for one's actions, no longer cherishes the least craving for those enjoyments, who does not seek to attain any selfish end of his through any action whatsoever, who does not need any object for himself.

The present verse shows that that action alone is perfectly Sāttvika, which answers all the qualifications mentioned above. If any of these characteristics is missing in a particular action, its Sāttvika character should be regarded as wanting to that extent. Besides this, it should also be taken to mean that Jñāna or realization follows from the quality of Sattva and Sāttvika actions alone; hence men who seek to know the truth about God should perform Sāttvika actions alone, and should not court bondage by performing Rājasika and Tāmasika actions.

Here it should be noted that the present verse defines Sāttvika action from the point of view of Sāṅkhyayoga; hence it precludes the sense of doership by the term 'Saṅgarahitam' and the feeling of attraction and aversion too by the word 'Arāgadveṣataḥ'. In verse 9, however, Sāttvika Tyāga has been declared to consist merely in giving up attachment and the craving for fruit of actions, performed from the point of view of Karmayoga. Hence there is no mention of the absence of doership in that verse; on the other hand, it advises the performance of actions as a matter of duty. Here lies the difference between Sāttvika Karma and Sāttvika Tyāga as defined in the two verses. God-realization through Knowledge of Truth is the reward of both; hence there is no real difference between the two, the difference lies only in their mode of practice.

The Lord now defines Rājasika action.

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहङ्कारेण वा पुनः।
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम्॥ २४॥

तु but; यत् कर्म the action which; बहुलायासम् involving much strain or exertion; पुनः and; कामेप्सुना by a man seeking enjoyments; वा or; साहङ्कारेण by him who is full of egotism; क्रियते is performed; तत् that; राजसम् Rājasika; उदाहृतम् has been spoken of (as).

That action, however, which involves much strain and is performed by one who seeks enjoyments or by a man full of egotism, has been spoken of as Rājasika. (24)

The words 'Bahulāyāsam Karma' refer to those desire-born and worldly undertakings for which many activities of diverse kinds have been prescribed, and which due to the feeling of identification with one's body one accomplishes with great exertion and grudge regarding them as a burden. The use of the compound adjective 'Bahulāyāsam' is intended to distinguish the Rājasika from the Sāttvika type of actions. The idea is that the doer of Sāttvika actions does not identify himself with his body and has no sense of doership in respect of his actions; hence he does not feel the least exertion

or hardship in performing any action whatsoever. Therefore, his actions do not involve any strain. The doer of Rājasika actions, however, does identify himself with the body, hence the toil and hardships involved in his actions make him unhappy; that is why he feels the strain while performing every action. Besides this, the doer of Sāttvika actions confines himself to those duties alone which fall to his lot from the sacred or secular point of view; hence he does not expand his activities. But the doer of Rājasika actions continues to undertake new enterprises every day, hence the scope of his activities gets much enlarged. That is another reason why acts of weary toil have been declared as Rājasika.

The compound word 'Kāmepsunā' stands for the self-centred man who ever goes on craving for enjoyments of various kinds, entertaining as he does the feeling of mineness and attachment in respect of them, and who does everything for the sake of enjoyments of this world and the next, such as wife, progeny, wealth, house honour, fame, prestige etc.

The use of the disjunctive particle 'Vā' in this verse is intended to convey that not only those actions which aim at the acquisition of objects of enjoyment but even those which, though not motivated by the desire for enjoyments, are prompted by egotism are Rājasika in character. The idea is that even those actions which are tainted by either of these two evils viz., the craving for enjoyment and egotism, are Rājasika, much more those which are characterized by both.

The word 'Sāhaṅkāreṇa' stands for the man who not only identifies himself with the body but all whose actions are prompted by egotism, nay, who claims the doership of actions, regards himself as nonpareil and makes much of his capabilities and is also given to bragging.

It has already been stated that Rājasika actions yield a crop of sorrow (XIV.16) and that the quality of Rajas binds man through attachment of actions (XIV.7); hence a seeker of liberation should never perform such actions. This is what is meant by calling the above actions Rājasika.

The Lord now characterizes Tāmasika action.

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनवेक्ष्य च पौरुषम्।
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते॥ २५॥

यत् कर्म the action which; **अनुबन्धम्** the upshot; **क्षयम्** loss (to oneself); **हिंसाम्** injury to others; **च** and; **पौरुषम्** one's own capacity; **अनवेक्ष्य** not counting; **मोहात्** through (sheer) ignorance; **आरभ्यते** is undertaken; **तत्** that; **तामसम्** Tāmasika; **उच्यते** is spoken of.

That action which is undertaken through sheer ignorance, without counting the upshot, loss to oneself, injury to others and one's own capacity, is declared as Tāmasika. (25)

Before launching an enterprise a man should exercise his own judgment and foresee its consequences, viz., whether it will lead to happiness or sorrow. Again, he should consider what will it cost him in the shape of money, bodily strength and time, to what extent it will interfere with Dharma or piety and what other losses it will entail. Thirdly, he should foresee in what way and to what extent it will cause hardship to other human beings or creatures and involve destruction of human or other

lives. And, fourthly, he should form an estimate of the capacity that will be required for accomplishing it and consider whether he possesses the requisite capacity. A Tāmasika action is that which does not take into account all these considerations and is undertaken in a reckless spirit. This is what the Lord seeks to convey in the present verse.

Inspired as it is by ignorance, which is a product of Tamoguṇa, such a rash act is called Tāmasika. And it has already been stated (XIV.18) that a Tāmasika action leads to Ajñāna, *i.e.,* birth in the species of stupid creatures, such as swine, dogs, plants etc., or condemnation to hell. Hence those seeking beatitude should never undertake such an act.

The Lord now defines a Kartā or doer of the Sāttvika type.

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते॥ २६॥

मुक्तसङ्गः free from attachment; अनहंवादी unegotistic; धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः endowed with firmness and vigour; सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः in success and failure; निर्विकारः free from morbid feelings (such as delight and grief etc.); कर्ता a doer; सात्त्विकः Sāttvika (in character); उच्यते is spoken of (as).

Free from attachment, unegotistic, endowed with firmness and vigour and unswayed by success and failure—such a doer is said to be Sāttvika. (26)

'Muktasaṅgaḥ' is he who has ceased to have any connection whatsoever with actions and their fruit. That is to say, he no longer entertains the least feeling of mineness, attachment and desire in respect of whatever is done by the mind, senses and body, or with regard to its fruit in the shape of honour, fame, prestige, wife, progeny, wealth, house and other enjoyments of this world and the next.

Again, 'Anahaṁvādī' is he who, having ceased to identify himself with the mind, intellect, senses and body, which are other than the Self, does not claim the doership in respect of any actions. He, therefore, never boasts, like men possessing a demoniac disposition, of his having realized a particular end, nor advertises his future designs. He does not claim to be "the lord, the enjoyer, a mighty and happy man, having no compeer" nor proclaims his intention to perform sacrifices and bestow gifts (XVI.13-15) but talks in an unaffected and unegotistic strain.

He who does not lose his balance of mind even when confronted with the greatest obstacles and difficulties while discharging any sacred obligation is called 'Dhṛtisamanvitaḥ'; while 'Utsāhasamanvitaḥ' is he who is not deterred by failure or by the thought that a man having no desire for fruit, need not engage in action, but who is devoutly eager to continue his efforts even as one who has achieved success or like one who seeks some reward for his actions. A man who is endowed with both these virtues, namely, firmness and zeal, does not shirk his duty even when faced with the heaviest odds, but diligently pursues it through thick and thin, surmounting all difficulties. These constitute the distinguishing marks of such a man.

Ordinary men of the world are overjoyed on the completion of an undertaking to which they feel attached and which they look upon as a means to the realization of

their desired end; even so they feel very miserable when it is interrupted and left half finished. Similarly, the success and failure of an undertaking awaken morbid feelings of various other kinds in their heart. Therefore, that man of an unruffled temperament who, having no feeling of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and the desire for fruit, neither exults over the accomplishment of an action nor grieves over its interruption and who is subject to no other morbid feeling either, that is to say, who remains equipoised under every circumstance and at all times, is called 'Siddhyasiddhyoḥ Nirvikāraḥ'.

He alone who possesses all the above qualifications is a perfectly Sāttvika doer; his Sāttvika nature will be found wanting to the extent he lacks these qualifications. Such Sāttvika traits manifest the hidden light of God, hence a seeker of liberation should imbibe the virtues of a Sāttvika doer.

The Lord now defines a doer of the Rājasika type.

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।
हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ २७ ॥

रागी Passionate or full of attachment; **कर्मफलप्रेप्सुः** seeking the fruit of actions; **लुब्धः** (and) greedy; **हिंसात्मकः** oppressive by nature; **अशुचिः** of impure conduct; **हर्षशोकान्वितः** (and) affected by joy and sorrow; **कर्ता** a doer; **राजसः** Rājasika in character; **परिकीर्तितः** has been spoken of (as).

The doer who is full of attachment, seeks the fruit of actions and is greedy, and who is oppressive by nature and of impure conduct, and is affected by joy and sorrow, has been called Rājasika. (27)

He who entertains a feeling of mineness and attachment in respect of actions and their fruit in the shape of enjoyments of this world and the next, that is to say, who remains attached to whatever action he performs as well as to its fruit, is called a 'Rāgī'.

He who goes on craving for wife, progeny, wealth, house, honour, fame, prestige and various other enjoyments of this world and the next, and does everything with a view to attaining these enjoyments alone, such a self-centred man is called 'Karmaphalaprepsuḥ'.

The greedy man who on account of his attachment to wealth and other possessions refuses to spend money according to his means even in a legitimate cause and cherishes an ardent longing for amassing wealth by fair means or foul, and who even seeks to usurp the rights of others and strives to that end, is called 'Lubdhaḥ'.

He who is habitually disposed to inflict suffering on others, by whatever means it may be possible, who cares not the least for the hardship of others while striving for the realization of his own ambitions, his actions being inspired by likes and dislikes, and who continues to oppress others for the sake of his own comfort and enjoyment, such a cruel man is called 'Hiṁsātmakaḥ'.

He who has no regard for personal cleanliness and morality, that is to say, who neither cleans his body and clothes etc. by the use of water and earth etc. nor maintains the purity of his conduct through propriety of behaviour, but who gives up cleanliness and right conduct with a view to attaining enjoyments of various kinds due to attachment for the same, is called 'Aśuciḥ'.

'Harṣaśokānvitaḥ' is he who is now

filled with delight and now plunged in grief in course of every activity and at every event, that is to say, whose mind is swayed by joy and grief at every step inasmuch as he cherishes a feeling of attraction and aversion towards every action and its fruit.

A doer who is possessed of any of the above characteristics belongs to the category of a Rājasika doer; and a Rājasika doer undergoes repeated births and deaths in different species of life, he does not escape from the whirligig of mundane existence. Hence a seeker of liberation should not allow himself to be a Rājasika doer.

The Lord now points out the characteristics of a Tāmasika doer.

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठोऽनैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।
विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥ २८ ॥

अयुक्तः lacking self-control and piety; प्राकृतः uncultured, vulgar; स्तब्धः arrogant; शठः deceitful; नैष्कृतिकः robbing others of their livelihood; अलसः slothful; विषादी down-hearted; च and; दीर्घसूत्री procrastinating; कर्ता doer; तामसः (as) Tāmasika; उच्यते is declared.

Lacking piety and self-control, uncultured, arrogant, deceitful, inclined to rob others of their livelihood, slothful, down-hearted and procrastinating, such a doer is called Tāmasika. (28)

'Ayuktaḥ' is he who has not been able to subdue his mind and senses, but on the other hand, who is under the control of his mind and senses, and who is lacking in faith and piety.

He who is naturally dull-witted and has not received good education, who possesses a childish nature, who has no knowledge of his duty (XVI.7) and whose mind and senses have not been improved by culture, is referred to here as 'Prākṛtaḥ'.

The arrogant man who is very hardhearted by nature, who has no element of humility in him, and who is ever intoxicated with pride, is called 'Stabdhaḥ'.

The crafty swindler who secretly harms others, concealing his malicious intentions, and is ever contriving plans to do them an ill turn, is referred to here as 'Śaṭhaḥ'.

'Naiṣkṛtikaḥ' is he who deprives others of their means of subsistence.

The slothful man who is wont to remain lying down all the twenty-four hours, who does not feel inclined or encouraged to perform any sacred or secular duty, and whose mind and senses are ever steeped in indolence, is spoken of here as 'Alasaḥ'.

The down-hearted man who grieves day and night and whose worries know no end (XVI.11) is called 'Viṣādī'.

And he who having taken up some work does not finish it for a long time,—who goes on putting it off from day to day, so that a work which could be finished in one day takes many days and is yet left unfinished, such a man of sluggish habits is called 'Dīrghasūtrī'.

The evil traits mentioned in the above verse are all products of Tamoguṇa; hence whoever possesses all these characteristics or many of them should be regarded as a doer of the Tāmasika type. And men of a Tāmasika disposition fall in the scale of spiritual evolution (XIV.18); they are born in sub-human species of various kinds, such as beasts and birds, insects and moths etc. (XIV.15). Hence a man seeking beatitude should not allow any of these characteristics to stay in him.

Having thus classified, Jñāna, Karma and Kartā in order of sequence out of the factors which motivate action as well as the constituents of action in order that the Sāttvika traits, which are helpful of the realization of Truth, may be imbibed and the Rājasika and Tāmasika propensities, which are prejudicial to such realization, may be discarded, the Lord now undertakes to classify in their order of sequence Buddhi and Dhṛti under three heads, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika.

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु।
प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय॥ २९॥

धनञ्जय O conqueror of riches, Arjuna; **बुद्धेः** of Buddhi (reason); **च** and; **धृतेः** of Dhṛti (firmness); **एव** also; **गुणतः** based on the (predominance of) each Guṇa or mode of Nature; **त्रिविधम् भेदम्** the threefold division; **अशेषेण** in full; **पृथक्त्वेन** one by one; **प्रोच्यमानम्** being told (by Me); **शृणु** hear.

Now hear, Arjuna, the threefold division, based on the predominance of each Guṇa, of Buddhi and Dhṛti also, which is being told by Me in full one by one. (29)

The word 'Buddhi' in this verse denotes the faculty of determination; it is also called 'Antaḥkaraṇa' or the internal organ. The Jñāna or knowledge which has been classified under three heads in verses 20, 21 and 22 is a product or function of Buddhi, which is the source of it. Verse 18 mentions 'Jñāna' as one of the factors that motivate action; while Buddhi has been included in the constituents of action under the name of 'Karaṇa' or instrument.

This constitutes the difference between Buddhi and Jñāna. The following verses classify Buddhi which is the chief Karaṇa or instrument, in order to bring out clearly the threefold division of Karaṇas, which form part of the constituents of action.

'Dhṛti' is the faculty of holding on to a particular pursuit, belief or idea; it is also a function of the intellect. It is through this faculty that a man firmly adheres to a particular activity or idea. Hence it is included in the category of 'Karaṇa'. The word occurs in verse 26 above among the characteristics of a Sāttvika doer; this is likely to give the impression that Dhṛti is Sāttvika only. But the truth is otherwise; Dhṛti also is of three kinds. It is in order to bring out this truth that 'Dhṛti' has been classified under three heads in the following verses.

The obvious intention of the Lord in classifying both Buddhi and Dhṛti under three heads is to point out that only the Sāttvika types of these are worth cultivating, while the Rājasika and Tāmasika types are to be given up.

In keeping with His promise to discuss the threefold divisions of Buddhi and Dhṛti, the Lord first of all defines Sāttvika Buddhi.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये।
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी॥ ३०॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; **या बुद्धिः** the intellect which; **प्रवृत्तिम्** the path of (right) activity; **च** and; **निवृत्तिम्** the path of renunciation; **कार्याकार्ये** what ought to

be done and what should not be done; भयाभये (what is) fear and (what is) fearlessness; च and; बन्धम् (what is) bondage; च and; मोक्षम् (what is) liberation; वेत्ति knows (correctly); सा that (intellect); सात्त्विकी is Sāttvika.

The intellect which correctly determines the paths of activity and renunciation, what ought to be done and what should not be done, what is fear and what is fearlessness, and what is bondage and what is liberation, that intellect is Sāttvika. (30)

The way to God-realization is twofold. The first consists in practising worship of God performing noble deeds enjoined by the scriptures, such as sacrifice, charity and austerity, vocational duties consistent with one's grade in society and stage in life, and bodily functions such as eating and drinking etc. All this has to be done in a disinterested spirit for the sake of God-realization while following the rules of any one of the first three Āśramas or stages in life and giving up the feeling of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and the craving for reward. This is known as the path of activity. And right knowledge of this path consists in forming a correct idea about the same and following it according to the ideal of the ancient kings Janaka and Ambarīṣa and that of great sages Vasiṣṭha, Yājñavalkya and so on.

The other path is the path of renunciation. It consists in completely abstaining from all activities and enjoyments both externally and internally and remaining constantly engaged in hearing, reflection and contemplation or in the adoration and remembrance of God and chanting His names etc. along with the practice of control of mind and the senses, endurance etc., while staying in the fourth Āśrama of Sannyāsa and remaining aloof from all kinds of worldly distractions. Again, all this has to be done for the sake of God-realization and renouncing the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as attachment. And right knowledge of this path consists in forming a correct notion of it and following it according to the ideals of Sanaka and his three brothers, Nārada, Lord Ṛṣabhadeva and Śukadeva.

'Kārya' is that which a man ought to do at a particular place and on a particular occasion considering his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances; and that which should be shunned by him on a particular occasion is 'Akārya' for him. Right knowledge of 'Kārya' and 'Akārya', therefore, consists in correctly determining whether an action one is called upon to perform is worth performing or whether one should abstain from it.

The nervous excitement caused in one's mind by the presence of some disagreeable object or occurrence or by the apprehension of such an occurrence is called 'Bhaya' or fear; and the absence of such a feeling is called 'Abhaya' or fearlessness. Right knowledge of Bhaya and Abhaya, therefore, consists in shaking off fear by knowing the truth of both, *i.e.,* ascertaining the causes which go to make one feel nervous and the way how to overcome this feeling and attain the state of fearlessness.

The compulsion under which a Jīva or embodied soul has to go through an unending series of births and deaths from time without beginning due to its connection with good or evil actions is called 'Bandha' or bondage. And when all the ties of good and evil Karma that bind a soul are cut asunder by the grace of God through the practice of Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Jñānayoga or any other discipline undertaken as a result of association with holy men, and the soul

attains God-realization, it is said to have achieved Mokṣa or liberation.

The correct knowledge of Bandha consists in grasping the true nature of bondage as defined above and ascertaining the causes which have thrown the Jīva into bondage, as well as the factors which go to tighten this bond and so on; while true knowledge of Mokṣa consists in correctly apprehending what is meant by securing freedom from this bondage and discovering how and by what means it can be secured.

To sum up, the Sāttvika type of intellect is that which is capable of correctly determining all these points, which neither errs nor wavers in its judgment on any of these issues—which pronounces its correct verdict on whatever point it is sought. The Sāttvika type of intellect frees man from the bondage of mundane existence and leads to the attainment of the supreme state; hence a seeker of blessedness should improve his intellect by cultivation of the above traits and make it Sāttvika.

The Lord now defines the Rājasika type of intellect.

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च।
अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी॥ ३१॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; यया by which; धर्मम् what is right; च and; अधर्मम् what is wrong; च as well as; कार्यम् what ought to be done; च and; अकार्यम् what should not be done; एव also; अयथावत् not as they are; प्रजानाति (man) perceives; सा that; बुद्धिः intellect; राजसी (is) Rājasika.

The intellect by which man does not truly perceive what is Dharma and what is Adharma, what ought to be done and what should not be done,—that intellect is Rājasika. (31)

Virtues like non-violence, truth, compassion, tranquillity, continence, endurance, subjugation of the mind and senses as well as sacrifice, charity and austerity, study and teaching of the scriptures, governance of the people, agriculture, rearing of cattle and service, and all other noble pursuits enjoined by the Śāstras with due regard to one's grade in society and stage in life—the performance of which, the Śāstras declare, is rewarded with the enjoyments of this world and the next—and acts of benevolence, all these are covered by the term 'Dharma'.*

---

* The Śāstras have glorified Dharma in glowing terms. *Bṛhaddharma-Purāṇa* has said as the following:—

Dharma, which protects this universe and has been represented in the form of a bull, is believed to have four legs. In the Satyayuga it is whole with four legs, in the Tretā age the number of its legs is reduced to three, in the Dvāpara it is further reduced to two, while in the Kali age only one leg remains.

The four legs of Dharma are: Truth, Compassion, Tranquillity and Non-violence—

सत्यं दया तथा शान्तिरहिंसा चेति कीर्तिताः। धर्मस्यावयवास्तात चत्वारः पूर्णतां गताः॥

Of these, Truth presents itself in the following twelve forms:—

अमिथ्यावचनं सत्यं स्वीकारप्रतिपालनम्। प्रियवाक्यं गुरोः सेवा दृढं चैव व्रतं कृतम्॥
आस्तिक्यं साधुसङ्गश्च पितुर्मातुः प्रियङ्करः। शुचित्वं द्विविधं चैव ह्रीरसञ्चय एव च॥

"Uttering no untruth, keeping one's promise, speaking agreeable words, service of the preceptor,

That which has been enjoined by the Śāstras as worth performing for a man at a particular time and place with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, is Kārya for him; while that which has been declared in the Śāstras as not only worth abstaining from or forbidden but as something which must not be performed in any case, is Akārya. Whereas sinful acts prohibited by the Śāstras are worth abstaining from for all, even out of noble acts enjoined by the scriptures some are worth performing for a particular class while others are worth abstaining from for that very class. For example, while service is worth performing for a Śūdra (a member of the labouring class) the performance of sacrifice and study of Vedas etc. are worth shunning for him; while the practice of Viveka (discrimination between real and unreal, eternal and evanescent, matter and spirit etc.), Vairāgya (dispassion), control of the mind and senses and so on are worth performing for a recluse, the performance of sacrifices and practice of charity etc. are worth shunning

---

strict observance of a vow, piety, association with holy men, doing what pleases one's parents, external purity, internal purity, shyness and keeping no possessions."

Compassion expresses itself in the following six forms:—

परोनकारो दानं च सर्वदा स्मितभाषणम्। विनयो न्यूनताभावस्वीकार: समतामति:॥

"Benevolence, charity, unfailing geniality of speech, meekness, modesty and evenness of temper." Tranquillity presents the following thirty characteristics:—

अनसूयाल्पसन्तोष इन्द्रियाणां च संयम:। असङ्गमो मौनमेवं देवपूजाविधौ मति:॥
अकुतश्चिद्भयत्वं च गाम्भीर्यं स्थिरचित्तता। अरूक्षभाव: सर्वत्र नि:स्पृहत्वं दृढा मति:॥
विवर्जनं ह्यकार्याणां सम: पूजापमानयो:। श्लाघा परगुणेऽस्तेयं ब्रह्मचर्यं धृति: क्षमा॥
आतिथ्यं च जपो होमस्तीर्थसेवाऽऽर्यसेवनम्। अमत्सरो बन्धमोक्षज्ञानं संन्यासभावना॥
सहिष्णुता सुदु:खेषु अकार्पण्यममूर्खता।

"Absence of a cavilling spirit, contentment with a small amount or quantity, control of the senses, freedom from attachment, taciturnity, devotion to the worship of gods, fearlessness, gravity, steadiness of mind, absence of impassivity, freedom from craving of all sorts, a resolute will abstaining from prohibited actions, equipoise in honour and ignominy, praising others, virtues, non-thieving, continence, fortitude, forbearance, hospitality, practice of Japa or muttering of mystic formula, offering oblations into the sacred fire, visiting sacred places, service of noble men, freedom from jealousy, knowledge of bondage and freedom, a spirit of renunciation, endurance even in the face of great calamities, absence of stingines and absence of dull-wittedness."

There are seven modes of Ahiṁsā or Non-violence:—

अहिंसा त्वासनजय: परपीडाविवर्जनम्। श्रद्धा चातिथ्यसेवा च शान्तरूपप्रदर्शनम्॥
आत्मीयता च सर्वत्र आत्मबुद्धि: परात्मसु।

Control over one's squatting posture, abstaining from infliction of pain on others through mind, speech or body, piety, hospitality, wearing a look of serenity, regarding all as one's own, and a feeling of oneness with others."

This is Dharma. Even a little practice of this Dharma is supremely beneficial and violation of it is highly detrimental.

यथा स्वल्पमधर्मं हि जनयेत्तु महाभयम् स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात्॥

(Ibid., Pūrvakhaṇḍa, I.47)

"Just as a little deviation from virtue is fraught with great danger, even so a little practice of this Dharma protects from great fear."

Side by side with this Dharma, consisting of four limbs, a man should perform duties consistent with his grade in society and stage in life.

for him; performing sacrifices and officiating at them, bestowing and accepting gifts, and the study and teaching of the Vedas are worth performing, while service as a means of subsistence is worth abstaining from for the Brāhmaṇa (a member of the priestly class); even so for Vaiśya (a member of the trading class) agriculture, rearing of cows and trade etc. are worth pursuing, while accepting gifts is worth abstaining from. This proves that a particular duty is not worth performing for all simply because it is included in the category of Dharma enjoined by the scriptures. In this way that which is Dharma can be worth performing and worth shunning too. Here lies the difference between Dharma and Kārya, on the one hand, and between Adharma and Akārya, on the other. The intellect which is at a loss to judge whether a particular course of action which a man is required to choose or reject is worth adopting or abstaining from, and to decide what he should do and how and what he should not, is said not to perceive correctly what is Kārya and what is Akārya.

Such an intellect, which is unable to determine the real nature of things, is never established in Viveka and remains distracted and fickle due to its contact with Rajoguṇa; hence it is Rājasika. And a Rājasika tendency is said to result in sorrow; hence he who seeks blessedness should eliminate the Rājasika traits present in one's intellect through association with saints, the study of good books and cherishing noble ideas, and at the same time strive to awaken and foster Sāttvika impulses.

The Lord now defines the Tāmasika Buddhi.

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता।
सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी॥ ३२॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; **या** which; **तमसावृता** wrapped in ignorance; **बुद्धिः** intellect; **अधर्मम्** (even) Adharma; **धर्मम्** (it is) Dharma; **इति** thus; **मन्यते** imagines; **सर्वार्थान्** (and sees) all other things; **च** too; **विपरीतान्** contrary; **सा** that (intellect); **तामसी** (is) Tāmasika.

The intellect which imagines even Adharma to be Dharma, and sees all other things upside-down,-wrapped in ignorance, that intellect is Tāmasika, Arjuna. (32)

The intellect which regards denunciation of God and other deities; defiance of the authority of the scriptures, disrespect towards one's parents, preceptor and others, violation of the rules of Varṇa and Āśrama, discontent, hypocrisy, duplicity, adultery, lying, oppressing others, taking prohibited food, acting as one pleases, usurpation of others' rights and other prohibited acts of a sinful nature as acts of virtue is said to mistake Adharma for Dharma. Such an intellect further regards fortitude forbearance, control of the mind and senses, non-thieving, purity, discernment, right knowledge, truthfulness, absence of anger, worship of God and other deities, study of sacred books, following the rules of Varṇa and Āśrama, carrying out the behests of one's parents and other superiors, artlessness, continence, taking Sāttvika food, non-violence, benevolence and other virtues enjoined by the scriptures as Adharma. This is equally implied by the first half of this verse, which can be interpreted the other way as well by treating 'Dharma' as the object and 'Adharmam' as a complement.

Just as this intellect imagines Adharma to be Dharma, even so it mistakes sorrow for joy, the evanescent for the eternal, the impure for the pure, loss for gain, and so on. All these instances of a distorted vision are included in seeing all things upside-down.

In other words, a Tāmasika intellect is that which has almost lost its critical faculty, so that its verdict in all matters is warped. This type of intellect brings down the human soul in the scale of spiritual evolution; hence those who seek beatitude should discard such an intellect.

The Lord now defines Sāttvika Dhṛti.

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः।
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी॥ ३३॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; यया अव्यभिचारिण्या धृत्या by which unwavering firmness; योगेन through the Yoga of meditation; मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः the functions of the mind, the vital airs and senses; धारयते (man) controls; सा that; धृतिः firmness; सात्त्विकी (is) Sāttvika.

The unwavering firmness by which man controls through the Yoga of meditation the functions of the mind, the vital airs and the senses—that firmness, Arjuna, is Sāttvika. (33)

The faculty of resolutely maintaining or keeping up any activity, feeling or idea,—sustained by which an activity, feeling or idea does not languish but endures for a long time,—such a faculty is called 'Dhṛti' or firmness. But so long as man continues with the help of this firmness to clutch various objects with different motives, its inconstancy or fickleness does not cease. When, however, man sets before him a fixed goal, the Dhṛti becomes constant. Sāttvika Dhṛti has only one object, the realization of God. That is why it is called 'Avyabhicāriṇī'.

The idea is that the Dhṛti which remains fixed on one and only one object, viz., God-realization, which never deviates from its purpose, which has no diverse motives and by which man keeps his mind and senses etc., directed towards God for the sake of His realization and ever maintains his control over them, allowing them on no account to waver and get attached to sense-objects,—such a Dhṛti is Sāttvika. This type of Dhṛti enables man to attain God speedily; hence he who seeks beatitude should endeavour to make his Dhṛti Sāttvika.

The Lord now characterizes Rājasika Dhṛti.

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन।
प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी॥ ३४॥

तु but; पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī); अर्जुन O Arjuna; फलाकाङ्क्षी he who seeks a reward for his actions; यया धृत्या by which Dhṛti or firmness; प्रसङ्गेन with extreme fondness; धर्मकामार्थान् Dharma (virtue), Artha (earthly possessions) and Kāma (worldly enjoyments); धारयते clutches; सा that; धृतिः Dhṛti (firmness); राजसी (is) Rājasika.

The Dhṛti, however, by which the man seeking a reward for his actions

clutches with extreme fondness virtues, earthly possessions and worldly enjoyments,— that Dhṛti is Rājasika, Arjuna. (34)

The idea is that the type of Dhṛti by which a man clings to virtue, wealth and enjoyments alone in the aforesaid manner, paying little heed to the means of attaining liberation, is connected with Rajoguṇa inasmuch as attachment and desire are products of no other quality than Rajoguṇa hence it is Rājasika in character. And such a Dhṛti binds man through actions; hence a seeker of blessedness should strive to make his Dhṛti Sāttvika and not allow it to lapse into Rajoguṇa.

The Lord now defines Tāmasika Dhṛti.

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च।
न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी॥ ३५॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī) Arjuna; दुर्मेधाः an evil-minded person; यया by which (firmness); स्वप्नम् sleep; भयम् fear; शोकम् anxiety; विषादम् sorrow; च and; मदम् vanity; एव too; न not; विमुञ्चति shakes off; सा that; धृतिः firmness; तामसी (is) Tāmasika.

The firmness by which an evil-minded person refuses to shake off, i.e., clings to sleep, fear, anxiety, sorrow and vanity as well, that firmness is Tāmasika. (35)

The evil-minded man whose intellect is extremely dull and impure and whose mind is engrossed with ideas of harming others and so on is referred to here as 'Durmedhāḥ'.

The word 'Svapna' here includes sleep, drowsiness and all other tendencies which go to wrap the mind and senses in ignorance and make them inactive and dull; 'Bhaya' denotes the feeling of uneasiness and distraction caused in the mind by the apprehension of loss of fortune or other possessions, death, trouble, loss of happiness or any other agreeable object and any other untoward occurrence; 'Śoka' includes worries of various kinds which torment the mind; and the agony caused to the senses by such worries is called 'Viṣāda'; this is only a concrete form of 'Śoka'. And the feeling of intoxication caused by richness in men and money and physical strength etc., and divorced from discernment, prudence and foresight, is called 'Mada'; it is also known by other names such as pride, arrogance and vanity. Instead of trying to eliminate these and other Tāmasika propensities such as carelessness etc., from the mind, he who remains filled with them is said to cling to 'Svapna', 'Bhaya' and so on.

This Tāmasika Dhṛti is a source of evil in every way; hence a seeker of blessedness should immediately and wholly renounce this form of Dhṛti.

Having thus classified Buddhi and Dhṛti under three heads, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, in order of sequence, in order that the Sāttvika types of both may be chosen and the other two types of each, viz., Rājasika and Tāmasika, may be rejected, the Lord now undertakes to classify joy as well under three heads and begins with the characteristics of Sāttvika joy.

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ।
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति॥ ३६॥

यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम्।
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम्॥ ३७॥

भरतर्षभ O best among Bharatas; इदानीम् now; त्रिविधम् of three kinds; सुखम् joy; तु also; मे from Me; शृणु hear; यत्र in which; अभ्यासात् through practice (of adoration, meditation and service to God etc.); रमते (the Sādhaka) finds enjoyment; च and; दुःखान्तम् the end of sorrow; निगच्छति reaches; यत् which (is of this type); तत् that (joy); अग्रे in the beginning; विषम् इव (though) appearing as poison; परिणामे eventually, in the long run; अमृतोपमम् (tastes) like nectar; तत् (therefore) that; आत्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् born of the placidity of mind brought about by meditation on God; सुखम् joy; सात्त्विकम् (as) Sāttvika; प्रोक्तम् has been declared.

Now hear from Me the threefold joy too. That in which the Sādhaka finds enjoyments through practice of adoration, meditation and service to God etc., and whereby he reaches the end of sorrow,—such a joy, though appearing as poison in the beginning, tastes like nectar in the end; hence that joy, born as it is of the placidity of mind brought about by meditation on God, has been declared as Sāttvika. (36-37)

Just as the Lord classified Jñāna, Karma, Kartā, Buddhi and Dhṛti one after another, even so He now undertakes to classify Sukha under three heads in order that one may choose the Sāttvika type and reject the Rājasika and Tāmasika ones. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the first half of verse 36.

The relative adverb 'Yatra' refers to the supreme Bliss attained by the Yogī whose mind is perfectly serene (VI.27). This type of joy is experienced only when a man withdraws his attachment from all enjoyments of this world and the next, taking them as ephemeral, and practises constant meditation on the reality of God (V.21); it remains a sealed book to the unstriving. This is what is meant by speaking of this joy as "Abhyāsāt ramate yatra."

Again, the man who finds enjoyment in this type of joy is rid once for all of all kinds of suffering,—including that which has its origin in one's own body or mind, that which is attributable to natural causes and that which is caused by other animals, and succeeds in realizing the supreme eternal Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified and is an embodiment of supreme joy (V.21,24; VI.28). This is what is meant by the clause "Duḥkhāntaṁ ca nigacchati."

The indeclinable "Agre" denotes the time when a man takes to the practice of Viveka (distinguishing the real from the unreal, the eternal from the ephemeral and so on), Vairāgya (dispassion), control of the mind and senses and endurance etc., as a means to the attainment of Sāttvika joy on hearing its glory. It is a matter of common experience that on hearing from his elders the glory of learning a boy tries to pursue his studies, but having on real experience of its glory he finds it most unpleasant and difficult in the beginning to prosecute his studies to the exclusion of play and recreation. Even so the man who strives for the attainment of Sāttvika joy finds it extremely taxing and irksome to continue the practice of Viveka, Vairāgya, Śama, Dama, Titikṣā and so on, abstaining from sense-enjoyments. This is what is meant by the Lord when He speaks of Sāttvika joy as appearing like poison in the beginning.

As a result of continued practice when

the Sādhaka begins to experience the joy derived from meditation, it tastes like nectar to him; at that time all worldly enjoyments begin to appear insignificant, negligible and disagreeable to him. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the words 'Pariṇāme amṛtopamam'.

The Sāttvika joy referred to above is experienced only when the mind gets purified through constant practice of meditation on God. This is what is meant by the compound adjective 'Ātmabuddhiprasādajam'. By calling it Sāttvika the Lord means that this type of joy alone is joy par excellence, the Rājasika and Tāmasika types of joy being no joy at all in the real sense of the term. They are joy in name only, eventually they are the same as sorrow; hence a man seeking his redemption should constantly find enjoyment in Sāttvika joy alone, and not allow himself to be caught into the trap of Rājasika and Tāmasika joys.

The Lord now defines Rājasika joy.

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।
परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

यत् सुखम् the delight which; विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगात् (proceeds) from the contact of the senses with their objects; तत् that; अग्रे at first, at the time of enjoyment; अमृतोपमम् (even though appearing) like nectar; परिणामे in the end; विषम् इव (is) like poison; तत् that (joy); राजसम् (as) Rājasika; स्मृतम् has been spoken of.

The delight which follows from the contact of the senses with their objects is eventually poison-like, though appearing at first as nectar; hence it has been spoken of as Rājasika. (38)

The indeclinable 'Agre' in this verse refers to the time when a man begins to enjoy some object with his senses and mind for the sake of attaining Rājasika joy. A man experiences such delight only so long as he enjoys some object with his senses and mind; this is what is meant by the compound word 'Viṣayendriyasaṁyogāt'. And due to his attachment for the same the joy appears exceedingly agreeable to him; in the face of such a joy he cares a straw for any unseen joy. This is what is meant by the words 'Agre amṛtopamam'.

Like poison, enjoyment of this Rājasika delight is fraught with bitter consequences. This type of joy is joy only in appearance, it is no joy in the real sense of the term. The idea is that as man fondly enjoys worldly pleasures with his senses and mind, regarding them as joy itself, impressions of those enjoyments are left on the mind, due to which he seeks once more to obtain those very enjoyments; and with that end in view he impulsively perpetrates sins of various kinds through attachment. And in order to reap the evil consequences of such sinful acts he has to be reborn in subhuman species like insects, moths, beasts and birds etc., and to undergo terrible suffering in hells abounding in tortures.

With the growth of attachment for sense-objects, failure to obtain them again fills a man with grief and the absence of those objects too makes him extremely miserable. Seeing others more happy and prosperous than himself he is filled with jealousy; and the loss of strength, vitality, energy, intelligence and valour as well as the feeling of exhaustion following in the wake of enjoyment are very painful. Similarly

there are many other bitter consequences too. Therefore, even though this momentary pleasure derived from the contact of senses with their objects is really speaking disagreeable in every way, nevertheless, a sensual man ignorantly and fondly enjoys pleasures regardless of consequences and, taking them to be joy itself undergoes terrible suffering of various kinds and in numerous ways as a result thereof. His case is similar to that of an ailing man who takes an unwholesome diet due to attachment and love of flavour regardless of consequences, and suffers in consequence due to aggravation of his malady or meets with death. Or his case may be compared to that of a moth, which on account of its attachment to colour, the object of sight, finds pleasure in deliberately dashing against the flame of a lamp taking it to be an embodiment of joy, but suffers in the end by getting singed and dies.

This momentary pleasure appears as agreeable to us only because of our attachment to sense-objects, and attachment is a form of Rajoguṇa; hence it is Rājasika and binds man through attachment. Therefore, a seeker of beatitude should not allow himself to be enticed into the trap of this type of delight.

The Lord now characterizes Tāmasika delight.

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।
निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ ३९ ॥

यत् सुखम् the delight which; अग्रे during enjoyment; च and; अनुबन्धे in the end; च as well; आत्मनः मोहनम् stupefies the self; तत् that; निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थम् (joy) derived from sleep, indolence and obstinate error; तामसम् Tāmasika; उदाहृतम् has been called.

That which stupefies the self during its enjoyment as well as in the end,—derived from sleep, indolence and obstinate error; such delight has been called Tāmasika. (39)

During sleep the function of our mind and senses is suspended; this relieves us of the suffering caused by exhaustion and gives rest to these organs. The joy that we experience thereby is referred to here as 'Nidrottha Sukha' or joy derived from sleep. This joy lasts only so long as we are asleep, it is anything but constant; hence it is momentary or ephemeral. Besides this, the mind, intellect and senses lose their perspicacity, they are no longer capable of perceiving anything. In this way this joy is said to stupefy the self, viz., the mind and senses as well as the Spirit, which identifies itself with them. And due to attachment for this joy man has to be reborn in the end in the species of stupid and inanimate creatures such as trees, mountains etc., hence this joy is said to stupefy the Self even in the end.

Similarly, the sense of comfort that one feels on giving up exertion of the mind, senses and body while one remains lying, abstaining from all forms of activity, is referred to as 'Ālasyottha Sukha' or joy derived from Indolence. Like the joy derived from sleep, this joy also robs the mind and senses of their perspicacity and stupefies them during its enjoyment; and inasmuch as it leads to rebirth in the species of stupid creatures as a result to infatuation and attachment, it stupefies the self even in the end.

Idle pursuits undertaken through

attachment for the sake of diversion and foolish and deliberate neglect of duty—this is called 'Pramāda' or obstinate error. And the delight that one ignorantly finds in taking to idle pursuits because of the amusement they afford, and in neglecting one's duty because one is spared exertion thereby is 'Pramādottha Sukha' or joy derived from obstinate error. During the time a man is engaged in some frivolous pursuit by way of recreation he fails to perceive what he should do and what he should not; his faculty of judgment gets obscured through ignorance. And it is only when a man's judgment gets clouded that he neglects his duty. In this way this joy derived from obstinate error stupefies the self during its enjoyment. And in order to reap the consequences of lying, duplicity, violence and other sinful acts that one is liable to commit due to ignorance and attachment in course of such idle pursuits, as well as of the neglect of duty involved therein, one is reborn in vile species like swine and dogs and cast into hells. In this way it stupefies the soul even in the end.

Sleep, error and sloth—all these three are products of Tamoguṇa (XIV.17); hence the joy that is derived from these is Tāmasika in character. And it is by depicting these as agreeable that Tamoguṇa binds the human soul (XIV.8); hence a man seeking beatitude should not allow himself to be caught in the trap of this Tāmasika joy, which is momentary, stupefying and only apparent.

Having thus classified all the principal categories mentioned in verse 18 above under three heads, viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, the Lord now winds up this topic by declaring all the objects of this creation as characterized by the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti.

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः।
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः॥ ४०॥

पृथिव्याम् on earth; **वा** or; **दिवि** in heaven; **वा** or; **देवेषु** among the gods or celestials; **पुनः** or anywhere else; **तत्** that; **सत्त्वम्** being; **न** not; **अस्ति** is (there); **यत्** which; **प्रकृतिजैः** born of Prakṛti or Nature; **एभिः त्रिभिः गुणैः** from these three Guṇas; **मुक्तम्** free; **स्यात्** may be.

There is no being on earth or in the middle region or even among the gods or anywhere else, which is free from these three Guṇas born of Prakṛti. (40)

The word 'Pṛthivyām' in this verse denotes the terrestrial plane, all the subterranean regions such as Pātāla etc., and all animate as well as inanimate beings and objects comprised in those regions 'Divi' stands for the sky or the middle region existing immediately beyond the earth and all living beings and objects comprised therein. And the word 'Deveṣu' signifies all gods as well as the different celestial worlds and all objects existing in those worlds. The indeclinable 'Punaḥ' is intended to cover all other objects or living beings existing in any other part of the universe.

The word 'Sattvam' here denotes existence in general, i.e., the totality of living beings and other objects. What the Lord seeks to drive at in this verse is that all objects in the universe are products of the three Guṇas born of Prakṛti, viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; and it is attachment for these Guṇas born of Prakṛti that is responsible for the birth of living beings in various species (XIII.21). Therefore, of

the living beings and other objects existing on the terrestrial plane, in the middle region and in the celestial and all other worlds, there is no object or living being free from or beyond these three Guṇas. For while all material creation is undeniably for the same essence as the Guṇas, being a product of the same, all living beings are connected with those Guṇas as well as with the objects which are their products; hence they too are characterized by the three Guṇas.

Here it may be urged that those who have risen above the three Guṇas are also comprised in God's creation; how, then, can it be said that no living being in this universe is free from the Guṇas ? In this connection it may be submitted that even though in the eyes of the world the Guṇātīta (he who has risen above the three Guṇas) forms part of the universe, really speaking, the creation does not exist in his eyes nor does he abide in God's creation or in the body for the matter of that; it is in God alone that he lives in eternal union with Him, hence he is identical in essence with God. That is why he cannot be counted among ordinary creatures. Of course, if he is called a living being from the point of view of his body, which is a conglomeration of mind, intellect and senses etc., and is perceptible to all, we see no objection to it; for that conglomeration is nothing but a product of the Guṇas, hence how can it be declared as existing beyond the Guṇas ? Thus it can be safely asserted that no living being or object in this creation is free from the three Guṇas.

In the opening verse of this chapter Arjuna sought enlightenment on the truth about Saṁnyāsa and Tyāga separately; hence with a view to expounding the truth of both, the Lord first of all cited the opinion of various thinkers on the subject and then gave His own definitions of Tyāga (Renunciation) and a Tyāgī (men of renunciation) in verses 4 to 12 above. Thereafter, discussing the true conception of Saṁnyāsa (Sāṅkhyayoga) in verses 13 to 17, He classified in verses 18 to 40 principal categories such as Jñāna, Karma and Kartā etc., according to the predominance of the three Guṇas in order that one may adopt Sattvaguṇa which is helpful to the practice of Saṁnyāsa, and reject Rajas and Tamas, which are prejudicial to the same, and wound up the topic by declaring in the end the entire creation as characterized by the three Guṇas.

While discussing the nature of Tyāga in the introductory verses of this chapter, the Lord stated that it was not advisable to shirk one's prescribed duty (XVIII.7); on the other hand, He declared real Tyāga to consist in continuing to perform one's allotted duties while renouncing attachment and the desire for fruit (XVIII.9). But in that context He did not mention what duty is prescribed for whom. Therefore, in order to discuss in brief the true nature of prescribed duties, the part played by Bhakti or Devotion in Karmayoga discussed under the name of Tyāga and to show that its practice ultimately leads to the attainment of highest perfection, the Lord resumes discussion of the topic of Karmayoga under the name of Tyāga and undertakes to point out the natural duties allotted to the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra.

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परन्तप।
कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥ ४१ ॥

परन्तप O scourge of foes, Arjuna; ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशाम् of the Brāhmaṇa (the priestly class),

the Kṣatriya (the warrior class) and the Vaiśya (the trading class); च and; शूद्राणाम् of the Śūdras (the labouring class); कर्माणि the duties or functions; स्वभावप्रभवैः गुणैः according to the inborn qualities; विभक्तानि have been divided.

The duties of the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas, as well as of the Śūdras, have been divided according to their inborn qualities, Arjuna. (41)

The Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya—all these three belong to the category of Dvijas or the twice-born. All the three are entitled to wear the sacred thread (Yajñopavīta) and to study the Vedas and perform Vedic rites such as sacrifices and so on. That is why the three words 'Brāhmaṇa', 'Kṣatriya' and 'Viśa' have been compounded. The Śūdras are not included among the Dvijas and are not competent to wear the sacred thread, study the Vedas or perform sacrifices and other Vedic rites. It is in order to bring out this distinction that the word 'Śūdrāṇāṁ' has been separately used.

The sum-total of tendencies or predispositions formed as a result of actions performed by a particular Jīva through a number of lives is known by the name of Svabhāva or nature. It is in accordance with this nature that the three Guṇas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—manifest themselves in the mind of living beings. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the compound adjective 'Svabhāvaprabhavaiḥ' before 'Guṇaiḥ'. Again, it is in accordance with the manifestation of these Guṇas that men are born in different castes such as the Brāhmaṇas and so on. Therefore, it is on the basis of these Guṇas that the duties of the four Varṇas or grades of society have been apportioned by the Śāstras. The man who possesses an abundance of unmixed Sattva is born as a Brāhmaṇa; hence control of the mind and senses etc., have been declared to be his natural duties or functions. He whose nature is marked by an abundance of Rajas mixed with Sattva is born as a Kṣatriya; hence exhibition of valour and interpidity have been declared as his natural duties. He whose nature possesses an abundance of Rajas blended with Tamas is born as a Vaiśya; hence agriculture and rearing of cows etc., have been declared to be his natural avocation. And he whose nature is dominated by Tamas mixed with Rajas is born as a Śūdra; hence service of the other three classes has been declared his natural duty. This very idea has been explained at length in the commentary on verse 13 of Chapter IV.

According to the introduction given in the preceding verse the Lord first mentions the natural duties of a Brāhmaṇa.

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम्॥ ४२॥

शमः Subjugation of the mind; दमः subjugation of the senses; तपः enduring hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations; शौचम् external and internal purity; क्षान्तिः forgiving the faults of others; आर्जवम् straightness of mind, senses and behaviour; आस्तिक्यम् belief in the Vedas and other scriptures, God and life after death etc; ज्ञानम् (acquiring and imparting) knowledge (of the Vedas and other scriptures); च and; विज्ञानम् realization of the truth relating to God; एव all these (constitute); स्वभावजम् ब्रह्मकर्म the natural duties of a Brāhmaṇa.

Subjugation of the mind and senses, enduring hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations, external and internal purity, forgiving the faults of others, straightness of mind, senses and behaviour, belief in the Vedas and other scriptures, God and life after death etc., study and teaching of the Vedas and other scriptures and realization of the truth relating to God—all these constitute the natural duty of a Brāhmaṇa. (42)

Śama consists in subjugating and composing the mind—freeing it from all distractions and abandoning all thoughts of worldly objects.

Subduing all the senses, withdrawing them from external objects and employing them in practices for God-realization is called 'Dama'.

Enduring hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations—that is to say, observing the major vows of non-violence etc., forgoing luxuries and leading a simple life, observing a fast and other vows on every Ekādaśī (the eleventh day of every dark and bright fortnight) and other sacred days and living in the woods—all these are included in 'Tapas'.

Verse 3 of Chapter XVI speaks of external purity under the name of 'Śauca', while the opening verse of the same chapter mentions purity of mind under the name of 'Sattvaśuddhi'; the word 'Śaucam' in the present verse covers both these forms of purity. The word 'Śaucam' occuring in verse 7 of Chapter XIII also implies both these kinds of purity. That is to say, 'Śaucam' consists in maintaining the purity of one's mind, senses and body as well as of their activities, and not allowing impurity of any kind to creep into them.

The idea of forbearance has been explained at length in the commentary on verse 4 of Chapter X under the name of 'Kṣamā and in that on verse 7 Chapter XIII under the name of 'Kṣānti'.*

---

* Once upon a time king Viśvāmitra, son of Gādhi, accidentally arrived at the hermitage of the great sage Vasiṣṭha. He was followed by a huge army. Through the grace of Nandinī, a celestial cow yielding all desires, Vasiṣṭha treated the monarch alongwith his army to dishes of various kinds and gave him a present of jewels, wearing apparel and ornaments. The wonderful cow caught the imagination of Viśvāmitra, who asked Vasiṣṭha for the same. Vasiṣṭha refused to part with the cow on the plea that she had been kept by him for the service of gods, the manes and newcomers, as well as for sacrificial purposes. Viśvāmitra was proud of his strength in men and arms, he wanted to take her away by force. Nandinī approached Vasiṣṭha and piteously told him that the hard-hearted men of the royal army mercilessly belaboured her with whips and cudgels and wondered how he had shut his eyes to their tyranny. Vasiṣṭha gave her the following reply:—

क्षत्रियाणां बलं तेजो ब्राह्मणानां क्षमा बलम्।
क्षमा मां भजते यस्माद्गम्यतां यदि रोचते॥

(Mahābhārata, Ādiparva, 175, 28)

"The strength of Kṣatriyas lies in their indomitable courage, while the strength of the Brāhmaṇas lies in their forbearance. I cannot give up forbearance; you can leave me if you please."

Nandinī assured the sage that none could take her by force if he did not forsake her. And Vasiṣṭha in his turn gave her to understand that he had no intention to abandon her and that she was at liberty to stay if she could.

Thereupon Nandinī assumed a terrible aspect, her tail began to rain fire; thereafter, a host of barbarous tribes sprang up from her tail. The army of Viśvāmitra was utterly confounded. Nandinī's host did not kill a single member of the royal army, they all fled in terror. Viśvāmitra saw none who could protect

Harbouring no perversity or crookedness in the mind expressing through the senses what one feels in the mind and allowing no contortion in the body—this is what is meant by straightness of the mind, senses and body.

Believing in the authority and infallibility of the Vedas and other scriptures and in the existence of God and life after death, putting trust in the words of holy men and reposing unwavering faith in piety and virtue—all this is covered by 'Āstikyam'.

'Jñānam, consists in devoutly studying and teaching the Vedas and other scriptures and fully grasping their teachings.

And 'Vijñānam' means directly perceiving the reality of God through practices taught in the Vedas and other scriptures and recommended by holy men.

A Brāhmaṇa is dominated by unmixed Sattva; therefore, he has a natural bias for the duties enumerated above; his temperament is suited to the performance of these duties, hence he experiences no difficulty in performing them. This is what is meant by declaring them as the natural duties of a Brāhmaṇa. They, however, include some common duties as well. This should be taken to mean that although they are not the natural duties of Kṣatriyas and others, yet they can be performed by them with some effort inasmuch as God-realization is open to all and sundry.

The duties mentioned above are purely Sāttvika in character, hence they are particularly congenial to the temperament of a Brāhmaṇa; that is why the Lord has thought fit to include these alone in the duties of a Brāhmaṇa; and has not gone into further detail. They should, therefore, be supplemented by other duties that have been mentioned in *Manusmṛti* (the Code of Manu) and other works. Study and teaching of the Vedas, performing sacrifices and officiating at them, and accepting as well as bestowing gifts—are the six duties of a Brāhmaṇa mentioned in *Manusmṛti*.*

---

him. Then he was filled with great wonder and said:—

धिग्बलं क्षत्रियबलं ब्रह्मतेजोबलं बलम्।

(*Mahābhārata, Ādiparva,* 175, 44)

"Fie upon the might of the Kṣatriyas; the strength in the shape of spiritual glow of the Brāhmaṇas is real strength."

Thereafter king Kalmāṣapāda, who had assumed the form of a demon under the force of an imprecation, killed all the sons of Vasiṣṭha at the instigation of Viśvāmitra; yet Vasiṣṭha did not try to retaliate.

In the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki we have it that Viśvāmitra then renounced his sovereignty and undertook austere penance, and as a result of his terrible penance extending over thousands of years he gradually earned the titles of Rājarṣi (a royal sage) and Maharṣi (a great sage) and finally became known as a Brahmarṣi (a sage among the Brāhmaṇas). At the instance of gods the forbearing Maharṣi Vasiṣṭha acknowledged him a Brahmarṣi. In the end—

विश्वामित्रोऽपि धर्मात्मा लब्ध्वा ब्राह्मण्यमुत्तमम्।
पूजयामास ब्रह्मर्षिं वसिष्ठं जपतां वरम्॥

(*Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa,* I.65.27)

"Having attained the highest position of a Brāhmaṇa, the pious sage Viśvāmitra too offered his homage to the Brāhmaṇa sage Vasiṣṭha, the best of those who mutter sacred formulas.

* अध्यापनमध्ययनं यजनं याजनं तथा।
दानं प्रतिग्रहं चैव ब्राह्मणानामकल्पयत्॥

Having thus mentioned the duties of a Brāhmaṇa, the Lord now points out the duties of a Kṣatriya.

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम्।
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम्॥ ४३॥

शौर्यम् (exhibition of) valour; तेजः fearlessness; धृतिः firmness; दाक्ष्यम् cleverness; च and; युद्धे अपलायनम् refusing to flee from battle; दानम् bestowing gifts; च and; ईश्वरभावः lordliness; अपि all these (constitute); क्षात्रम् of a Kṣatriya; स्वभावजम् कर्म the natural duty.

Exhibition of valour, fearlessness, firmness, cleverness and steadiness in battle, bestowing gifts, and lordliness—all these constitute the natural duty of a Kṣatriya. (43)

'Śauryam' consists in fearlessly offering righteous opposition to the mightiest foe and remaining ever ready to fight in a just cause and putting up a sober and stout fight on the field of battle. The life of the great patriarch Bhīṣma is a glowing example of this virtue.*

'Tejas' is that moral stamina by dint of which a man firmly adheres to his duty under all circumstances, resisting all pressure exerted to the contrary, and due to which other people hesitate to do anything wrong

---

* Bhīṣma, the grand old man of the Kaurava army, remained a strict celibate all his life. He exhibited in himself all the virtues of a Kṣatriya. He received instruction in the use of arms from the avowed enemy of the Kṣatriya race, Lord Paraśurāma. When the latter pressed him hard to marry Princess Ambā, the eldest daughter of the King of Kāśī, he most respectfully declined in order to maintain his vow of celibacy. But when Paraśurāma could not be reconciled in anyway and began to indulge in severe threats, he plainly told him:—

न भयान्नाप्यनुक्रोशान्नार्थलोभान्न काम्यया। क्षात्रं धर्ममहं जह्यामिति मे व्रतमाहितम्॥
यच्चापि कत्थसे राम बहुशः परिवत्सरे। निर्जिताः क्षत्रिया लोके मयैकेनेति तच्छृणु॥
न तदा जातवान् भीष्मः क्षत्रियो वापि मद्विधः। पश्चाज्जातानि तेजांसि तृणेषु ज्वलितं त्वया॥
व्यपनेष्यामि ते दर्पं युद्धे राम न संशयः।

(Mahā., Udyoga., 178)

"I cannot abandon the duty of a Kṣatriya either out of fear, compassion, greed of wealth or for any other gain; this is my cherished vow. As for your boast that for many years together you wiped out the Kṣatriyas single-handed more than once (as many as twenty-one times), hear, O Rāma my reactions about it. The fact is that the heyday of your glory did not witness the birth of Bhīṣma or any other Kṣatriya of his category. You have burnt only straw. Luminaries among the Kṣatriyas appreared only later. Surely, Rāma, I shall curb your pride on the field of battle presently."

Paraśurāma got enraged. A duel ensued between them and raged furiously for full twenty days and three; but Parasurāma could not get the better of Bhīṣma. At last it was at the intervention of Nārada and the celestial sages and of Bhīṣma's celestial mother, goddess Gaṅgā herself, who bodily appeared on the scene, on Paraśurāma dropping down his bow, that the conflict ended. Bhīṣma neither turned his back on the battle-field nor laid down his arms first *(Mahā., Udyoga.,* 185).

Out of the eighteen days that the Mahābhārata war lasted, the great Bhīṣma held the field as the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava forces for full ten days. During the remaining eight days many generalissimos succeeded one after the other.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa had taken a vow not to take up arms during the Mahābhārata war. They say Bhīṣma took a counter-vow for some reason to the effect that he would compel the Lord to break His vow and take up arms. Although the epic does not describe the episode in the same way, the celebrated Hindi poet Sūradāsa has drawn an exquisite pen-picture of Bhīṣma's vow, Bhīṣma' says:—

or that which is not liked by him. It is also known by other names such as majesty and glory etc.

He who does not get unnerved even when faced with the gravest danger,—e.g., on being mortality wounded on the battle-field, on the death of his son, grandson or any other near relation, on losing his all or on being confronted with any other grave disaster—and remains devoted to his legitimate duty and never shirks it, is said to have what is called 'Dhṛti' or firmness.

The cleverness shown in dispensing justice to two or more contending parties, in determining and discharging one's duty, in fighting with the enemy and in dealing

---

"If I fail to make Śrī Hari take up arms, I should prove to be a shame to mother Gaṅgā and shall no longer call myself a son of Śāntanu. I shall break the mighty chariot and shake it alongwith the flag which bears a monkey (Hanumān) on its crest. Should I fail to do all this, I swear by the Lord Himself, let me not attain the high destiny of a Kṣatriya. I shall march in front of the Pāṇḍava host and shed a river of blood. Without attaining victory I shall not turn my back on the field of battle so long as there is life in me."

Be that as it may, the *Mahābhārata* says, on the third day from the outbreak of the war, when Bhīṣma waged a fierce fight, the Lord got enraged and dropped the reins of the horses, and taking up His discus, which blazed like the sun, leapt down from the chariot revolving it in His hand. Seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa armed with a discus, all those assembled on the field gave a loud yell of fear. Like the fire at the dissolution of the universe the Lord darted with great speed towards Bhīṣma. Seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa advance towards him, discus in hand, the high-souled Bhīṣma did not get the least frightened and, heroically sounding the string of his bow, addressed Him thus: "O God of gods, O abode of the universe, O Lord of Lakṣmī (the goddess of prosperity). O wielder of Discus, You are welcome; I bow to You, O Refuge of all, knock me down from this excellent car by force. Kṛṣṇa being slain at Your hands, I shall be highly blessed here as well as hereafter. O Lord of the Yadus, You personally rushed to kill me; this has enhanced my glory in all the three worlds."

Arjuna ran clasped the Lord's feet from behind and somehow persuaded Him to return.

(*Mahā.*, *Bhīṣma.*, 59)

Once again, on the ninth day of the war, Lord beheld that the grand old man had let loose a hell of destruction on the Pāṇḍava host. Dropping down the rein of the horses, the Lord darted once more towards Bhīṣma, whip in hand. And on every stride of the Lord the earth cracked as it were due to the fire of energy of the Lord. The heroes of the Kaurava army lost their nerve and exclaimed: "Bhīṣma is gone!" "Bhīṣma is no more!" Seeing the Lord rush towards him as a lion towards an elephant, Bhīṣma did not lose his balance and, stringing his bow, the grand old man said:—

एह्येहि पुण्डरीकाक्ष देवदेव नमोऽस्तु ते। मामद्य सात्वतश्रेष्ठ पातयस्व महाहवे॥
त्वया हि देव संग्रामे हतस्यापि ममानघ। श्रेय एव परं कृष्ण लोके भवति सर्वतः॥
सम्भावितोऽस्मि गोविन्द त्रैलोक्येनाद्य संयुगे। प्रहरस्व यथेष्टं वै दासोऽस्मि तव चानघ॥

(*Mahā.*, *Bhīṣma.*, 106.64—66)

"O lotus-eyed Lord, O God of gods, my obeisance to You. O best of the Yadus, hail, hail to You; slay me in this great battle. O sinless Lord, O Kṛṣṇa, meeting my death at Your hands today, I shall be blessed in everyway in this world. O Protector of cows, honoured in this way by you I have been honoured by all the three worlds. O sinless One, I am Your bond-slave; strike me at Your will.

Arjuna ran and clasped the hands of the Lord, but the latter did not stop and moved along, dragging Arjuna behind Him. At last, when Arjuna reminded him of His vow and took a solemn pledge to kill Bhīṣma, the Lord returned to His post.

Having fought for ten days when Bhīṣma was thinking of dropping his body, the seers and Vasus (a class of gods) present in the sky told Bhīṣma that they approved of his idea. Thereafter, refusing to strike Śikhaṇḍī, Bhīṣma the life long Brahmacārī, succumbed to the shafts of Arjuna and fell down

properly with one's friends, foes and neutrals, is referred to here as 'Dākṣyam.'

He who never turns his back on the field of battle even in the face of the gravest danger, who offers righteous opposition to the enemy under all circumstances and continues to exert his strength against him and remains fixed to his post risking his own life, serves as an illustration of 'Yuddhe apalāyanam'. Keeping this very ideal before him the youthful hero Abhimanyu courted death while contending with six great generals single-handed, but refused to lay down his arms *(Mahā., Droṇa,* 49.22). Even in the medieval history of Rajasthan we come across many such examples in which the valiant Rajput did not turn his back on the enemy even on being vanquished in battle and laid down their life by fighting single-handed against hundreds and thousands.

Liberally bestowing one's possessions on deserving persons according to their needs is what is called 'Dānam' (XVII.20).

'Isvarabhāvaḥ' consists in deterring the people from wrong-doing and turning them towards the right path, punishing the evildoers, enforcing lawful obedience to one's orders and taking care of and looking after the people as one's own progeny in a loving and disinterested spirit keeping in mind the interests of the general public.

The temperament of the Kṣatriyas is dominated by Rajoguṇa mixed with Sattva; hence they have a natural bias towards these duties, they experience no difficulty in performing them. Of these duties, again, those of a universal nature, such as firmness, charity etc., being open to all, are neither 'Adharma' (prohibited) nor Paradharma (alien) for non-Kṣatriyas; they are, however, not their natural duties. That is why their performance involves exertion on their part.

---

on a bed of arrows. While falling down Bhīṣma saw that the sun was still coursing in a southerly direction; hence he did not give up the ghost. Goddess Gangā (Bhīṣma's mother) despatched great seers in the form of swans to him. Bhīṣma told them that he would survive till the sun had changed its course and would give up the ghost only at the proper hour. Hardly an inch of space had been left in Bhīṣma's body, which was not penetrated by Arjuna's shafts *(Mahā., Bhīṣma.,* 119). His head alone was suspended in the air. The grey-haired warrior asked for a pillow. Duryodhana and others ran with valuable soft cushions. Bhīṣma laughed and said, "My valiant sons, such pillows hardly fit in with the bed of a fallen warrior." At last he asked Arjuna to provide him with a pillow suited to his needs. Arjuna shot three arrows under the head of Bhīṣma in such a way that it was raised and the shafts served him as a pillow. Bhīṣma was much pleased at this and spoke to Arjuna thus:—

एवमेव महाबाहो धर्मेषु परितिष्ठता। स्वप्तव्यं क्षत्रियेणाजौ शरतल्पगतेन वै॥

(Ibid., 120.49)

"It is in this way that a Kṣatriya who is strictly devoted to his duty should repose on a bed of arrows while casting off his mortal coil on the field of battle."

The great Bhīṣma was lying wounded on his bed of arrows. At this expert surgeons, proficient in the art of extracting arrows, were summoned. Bhīṣma told them that he had attained the highest destiny of a Kṣatriya; the surgeons were, therefore, no longer of any use to him *(Ibid.,* 120).

The wounds and cuts in the body of Bhīṣma were causing great pain to him. He asked for cold water. People ran with jars of ice-cold water. Bhīṣma reminded them that he was lying on a bed of arrows and was awaiting the change of course of the sun, and wondered what kind of drink they had brought for him. At last he summoned Arjuna and told him that his throat was getting parched with thirst and asked him to provide him with water as Arjuna was competent to do so. Arjuna mounted the chariot, strung his illustrious bow, Gāṇḍīva, and shot an arrow consecrated with a mystical, formula called Parjanyāstra into the ground to the right of his granduncle, Bhīṣma. Immediately there welled up a jet of nectar-like and fragrant water and fell into Bhīṣma's mouth. Bhīṣma quaffed that drink to his heart's content *(Ibid.,* 121).

This is what is meant by declaring the above duties as natural to Kṣatriya.

The *Manusmṛti* or the Code of Manu briefly mentions the following as the duties for a Kṣatriya. They are: (1) governance of the people, (2) bestowing gifts, (3) performing sacrifices (4) study of the Vedas and (5) non-attachment to sensuous pleasures. The Lord, however refers in this context to those duties alone that bear special affinity to the temperament of the Kṣatriyas: hence He has included in this verse only two of the five duties prescribed by Manu, viz., governance of the people and charity under the names of 'Īsvarabhāva' and 'Dāna', which bear special affinity to the Kṣatriya temperament. The other duties of the warrior class have not been dealt with at length in this verse. Hence the duties mentioned in this verse should be taken to include other duties as well that have been prescribed for the Kṣatriyas in other scriptures.

At the conclusion of the Mahābhārata war King Yudhiṣṭhira called on Bhīṣma along with Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All leading sages and seers, who had realized God, were present on the scene. Seeing the Lord, Bhīṣma greeted and extolled Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Bhīṣma that it would take some time before the sun would change its course towards the north; in the meantime He requested Bhīṣma to relieve Yudhiṣṭhira of his grief imparting to him the knowledge of the sacred lore that he had acquired. Bhīṣma submitted to the Lord that his body was smarting with pain on account of its wounds, that his mind and intellect were fidgety, that he was unable to speak, that he fainted every now and then, that it was by the Lord's grace alone that he had been surviving till then. Moreover, he felt that it would be presumptuous on his part to speak, anything in the presence of the Preceptor of the Universe. He was feeling tongue-tied, and therefore begged to be excused. With tears of love gushing from His eyes the Lord spoke in a voice choked with emotion, "Bhīṣma dear, your exhaustion, fits of swoon, the sensation of burning agony, pangs of hunger and torpor—everything shall presently disappear by My grace. Knowledge of every description shall flash on your mind, your intellect shall have a fixed resolve, your mind shall be ever established in the quality of Sattva, your reason shall begin to guide you in the matter of Dharma or any other branch of learning that you may fix your mind upon." He further told Bhīṣma that instead of doing it Himself He was asking him to speak only in order that the fame and glory of His devotee may be enhanced. By the grace of God all the agonies that Bhīṣma felt in his body disappeared then and there, his mind became alert and his intellect was fully awakened. By dint of his lifelong chastity, intuition, wisdom and devotion of God, Bhīṣma, whose knowledge was unfathomable, instructed Yudhiṣṭhira in all the aspects of Dharma with the same youthful vigour as he had evinced on the field of battle for ten days, and brought solace to the latter's heart, which was tormented with grief *(Mahā., Śānti., Anuśāsana).*

Having lain on his bed arrows for full fifty days and eight, Bhīṣma resolved to give up his ghost on the day the sun turned towards the north, and spoke to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as follows: "O Deity, O Supreme God of gods, O Lord who is adored by gods as well as demons, O Trivikrama (He who in His cosmic form measured all the three worlds in three strides), O Wielder of the celebrated Conch, Discus and Mace. I offer obeisance to You. O Vāsudeva (all-pervading Lord), You are Hiraṇyātmā (flaming like fire), the supreme Puruṣa Savitā (the Creator), Virāṭ (one endowed with a cosmic Body), the embodied soul, atom-shaped, the supreme Spirit and Sanātana (the everlasting one). O lotus-eyed one, O highest Person, pray redeem this soul. O Kṛṣṇa, O Vaikuntha, O Puruṣottama, now grant me leave to depart. I strongly admonished the dull-headed Duryodhana to realize the truth that:—

यतः कृष्णस्ततो धर्मो यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः।

"Where there is Kṛṣṇa, Dharma or righteousness is there; and where there is righteousness, victory is assured."

But the fool did not listen to my advice. I recognize You to be the Ancient Person Himself. You are Nārāyaṇa Himself descended on earth.

Having thus pointed out the natural duties of the Kṣatriya, the Lord now mentions those of the Vaiśya and the Śūdra.

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम्।
परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम्॥ ४४॥

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यम् agriculture, rearing of cows and honest exchange of merchandise; स्वभावजम् वैश्यकर्म (constitute) the natural duty of a Vaiśya or member of the trading class; परिचर्यात्मकम् service (of the other classes); शूद्रस्य अपि of the Śūdra or member of the labouring class also; स्वभावजम् कर्म (is) the natural duty.

Agriculture, rearing of cows and honest exchange of merchandise—these constitute the natural duty of a Vaiśya (a member of the trading class). And service of the other classes is the natural duty even of a Śūdra (a member of the labouring class). (44)

'Kṛṣi' or agriculture consists in sowing seeds of various crops in the soil and lawfully rearing all kinds of foodstuffs such as wheat, barley, grams, paddy, maize, peas, turmeric and coriander, cotton, herbs of various kinds and other pure substances useful for the consumption of gods, human beings and animals etc.

Keeping cows in one's own household like Nanda and other cowherds, grazing them in the woods. Serving them with fodder even at one's own place according to their needs, giving them water to drink and protecting them from tigers and other destructive animals, obtaining milk, curds, butter and other dairy products from them and supplying the needs of the public through these products, and lawfully maintaining oneself along with one's own family out of the sale proceeds of these commodities—all this is covered by 'Gaurakṣyam'. The cow is the chief among cattle and it is also the most serviceable to mankind; hence instead of using the word 'Paśupālanam' the Lord uses 'Gaurakṣyam'. Hence this should be taken to mean that the rearing of other animals serviceable to man, such as the buffalo, the camel, the horse and the elephant etc., is also part of the duty of a Vaiśya; of course, the rearing of the cow is the most important of his duties.

'Vāṇijyam' consists in buying and selling in a righteous spirit commodities useful for human beings and gods, beasts, birds and all other living beings and supplying the needs of the public by transporting them

स मां त्वमनुजानीहि कृष्ण मोक्ष्ये कलेवरम्।
त्वयाहं समनुज्ञातो गच्छेयं परमां गतिम्॥

(Mahā; Anu; 167., 45)

"Kṛṣṇa, pray allow me to cast off my body. Leaving this body with Your leave I shall attain the supreme state."

The Lord gave His assent. Thereupon Bhīṣma stopped the inhalation and exhalation of his breath through Yoga and gradually began to push it upwards. As the outgoing breath left a particular part of the body in its upward journey, the shafts stuck into that part were immediately forced out and the wounds got healed. In an instant all the arrows dropped out of Bhīṣma's body, not a single wound was left and his vital breath forced its way upwards through what is known as Brahmarandhra (an apperture in the crown of the head). People saw that a column of light issued from the Brahmarandhra and disappeared in the sky in the twinkling of an eye.

from one place to another according to local needs. Giving less or taking more in weight, measurement and number etc., while conducting a business transaction, giving an inferior quality for a superior quality or taking a superior quality for an inferior quality by changing the quality of or adulterating a commodity, taking more or giving less than the stipulated amount by way of profit, commission or brokerage, and even so wrongfully appropriating others' dues by resorting to lying, duplicity, stealing and violence or any other unlawful means in any business whatsoever—all these are foul practices in trade. Honesty in trade consists in avoiding all these foul practices and conducting one's dealings in a truthful manner. It is through such dealings that Tulādhāra attained perfection.*

The temperament of Vaiśya is dominated by Rajoguṇa mixed with Tamas, hence he comes to have a natural bias towards the duties mentioned in this verse. His disposition is suited to these pursuits; that is why he experiences no difficulty in undertaking them. This is what is meant by the words 'Vaiśyakarma svabhāvajam'.

In addition to these, the *Manusmṛti* (the Code of Manu) prescribes four more duties for the Vaiśya, viz., performing sacrifices, study of the Vedas, charity and money-lending.† The Lord, however, mentions here only those duties which bear particular affinity to the temperament of a Vaiśya. Noble pursuits such as the performance of a sacrifice are prescribed for all the twice-born classes (those who are entitled to wear the sacred thread and study the Vedas), hence they have not been included in the natural duties of a Vaiśya; and money-lending has been recognized as inferior to other duties prescribed for the Vaiśyas, hence that too has not been enumerated among the natural duties of a Vaiśya. Besides these, subjugation of the mind and senses and other practices conducive to liberation, being open to all, are not excluded from the natural duties of a Vaiśya; but since a Vaiśya has no natural tendency towards such practices, they have not been reckoned among his natural duties.

Living by the service of the twiceborn classes, viz., the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas, carrying out their orders, supplying their household with water, helping them in their ablutions, affording them facilities in carrying out their vocational duties, duly helping them in their daily routine, tending their animals, taking care of their belongings, washing their clothes,

* In Kāśī (the modern Banaras) there was a Vaiśya trader, Tulādhāra by name. He was a great ascetic and embodiment of virtue. He carried on business transaction with honesty and truthfulness.

A Brāhmaṇa, named Jājali, performed austere penance on the sea-shore. Birds built nests in his matted hair; this made him proud of his austerity. Then a voice from heaven addressed him thus: "Jājali, you are not so pious as Tulādhāra; he does not feel proud like you." Jājali went all the way to Kāśī and saw that Tulādhāra traded in fruits and roots, condiments, clarified butter and so on. He received the Brāhmaṇa kindly, treated him with respect, bowed to him, and then said, "You have performed rigorous penance on the sea-shore. Birds laid eggs in your matted hair, this elated you and now the voice from heaven has brought you to this place. Pray tell me how can I be of service to You." Jājali was greatly surprised at this wonderful knowledge of Tulādhāra. Asked by Jājali, Tulādhāra gave a beautiful dissertation on Dharma or duty. Hearing the secret of Dharma or virtue from the lips of Tulādhāra, Jājali derived much solace. This beautiful anecdote is given in Chapters 261 to 264 of *Śāntiparva* of the *Mahābhārata*.

† पशूनां रक्षणं दानमिज्याध्ययनमेव च। वणिक्पथं कुसीदं च वैश्यस्य कृषिमेव च॥

(I. 90)

shaving them and gratifying them with all other kinds of services, or manufacturing articles of common use by manual skill and serving them with those articles and making one's living by serving them with those articles,—all these are covered by the words 'Paricaryātmakam karma'.

The temperament of a Śūdra is dominated by Tamoguṇa mixed with Rajas, hence he comes to have a natural leaning towards the above-mentioned acts of service. These duties are suited to his temperament, that is why he experiences no difficulty whatsoever in performing them. This is what is meant by calling them the natural duties of a Śūdra. Again, the use of the particle 'Api' with Śūdrasya' is intended to convey that just as other duties are natural for members of other Varṇas or castes, even so in the case of the Śūdra service is natural duty. It further shows that service is the only duty prescribed for a Śūdra* and the same is natural with him, so that its performance is very easy for him.†

* एकमेव तु शूद्रस्य प्रभुः कर्म समादिशत्। एतेषामेव वर्णानां शुश्रूषामनसूयया॥

(Manu. I.91)

"The Lord has prescribed only one duty for the Śūdra, viz., ungrudging service to the twice-born classes mentioned above."

† Today it is alleged that the division of society into four grades or orders is a selfish creation of members of the higher or twice-born classes, who have been in power. But careful thought would reveal that for the healthy organization of society Varṇadharma is most essential and it is no human creation either. The institution of Varṇa is a creation of God. The Lord Himself says:—

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः। (*Gītā* IV.13)

"The four orders of society (viz., the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra) have been created by Me, classifying them according to the mode of Prakṛti predominant in each and apportioning corresponding duties to them."

The great sages and seers of India who were endowed with a prophetic vision and had an intuition of the past and future as well, directly perceived this divine truth and raising the edifice of society on the solid foundation of this truth, gave it an ordered shape and made it peaceful and prosperous, morally sound, active, unselfish, beneficient and secure. For the efficient organization of the human society the need of a fourfold division has been felt at all time and in all climes and the same has existed and does exist in all parts of the world. But the systematized form in which this division existed in this land of sages and seers did not exist anywhere else.

For establishing and maintaining the rule of Dharma or righteousness in society and in order that the society may continue to lead a happy life, and for diligently removing any clog that may present itself in the smooth working of the society, for ending the vicious circle of Karma, for resolving tangles and for giving an authoritative decision when the society is faced with a conflict of duties, what is needed is a clear and unfogged brain. Even so muscular strength or prowess is essential for protecting Dharma as well as the society that has taken its stand on Dharma. Wealth and food are essential for properly nourishing the brain and the muscles. And for the proper discharge of these functions physical exertion or labour is equally essential.

That is why the Brāhmaṇa represents the brain of the social organism, the Kṣatriya is its arm, the Vaiśya its thigh and the Śūdra represents its feet. They are the four essential limbs of the same social organism and depend for their protection and life on mutual help and co-operation. Contempt or contumely being altogether out of the question, one cannot afford to entertain the least disregard for another. Nor is there any idea of superiority or inferiority between them. All of them are superior in their own position and sphere of activity. The Brāhmaṇa is superior by virtue of his knowledge and wisdom, the Kṣatriya by virtue of his valour, the Vaiśya by virtue of his wealth or material resources, and the Śūdra by virtue of his numerical strength or capacity for physical exertion. And all the four

Having thus enumerated the natural duties of the four Varṇas, the Lord now tells us, in the following two verses, the mode of their performance which would easily enable the performer to attain the highest perfection. The Lord's motive in doing so is to reveal the true nature of 'Karmayoga coupled with Devotion and its reward.

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः।
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु॥ ४५॥

स्वे स्वे कर्मणि to his own natural duty; **अभिरतः** keenly devoted; **नरः** man; **संसिद्धिम्** the highest perfection (in the shape of God-realization); **लभते** attains; **स्वकर्मनिरतः** (a man) engaged in his natural duty; **यथा** whereby; **सिद्धिम्** (the highest) perfection; **विन्दति** attains; **तत्** that (mode of performance); **शृणु** hear.

Keenly devoted to his own natural duty, man attains the highest perfection in the shape of God-realization. Hear the mode of performance whereby the man engaged in his inborn duty reaches that highest consummation. (45)

---

have their full utility. They have sprung from the body of one and the same God,—the Brāhmaṇa from His mouth, the Kṣatriya from His arms, the Vaiśya from His thighs and the Śūdra from his feet—

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः। ऊरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत॥

(*Ṛgveda-Saṁhitā* X.90.12)

But the respective strength of these orders or classes is neither conducive to the attainment of their own selfish ends nor aims at self-exaltation by relegating others to a subordinate position. Duties have been divided between them as between the essential limbs of the social organism according to their respective capacity or aptitude. And all this has been done in order that one may discharge one's own duty and enable others to do the same ! Since duties have been properly apportioned without any idea of superiority or inferiority, balance of power is maintained between the four orders. None can disregard another or encroach upon the legitimate rights of another. Built as it is on the solid foundation of division of duties on the basis of qualifications this institution of Varṇa is so well-organized that balance of power is automatically maintained. By clearly and separately mentioning the duties of each order God Himself as well as the seers who have laid down rules for the conduct of society have afforded all enhanced facilities for discharging their respective duties unhampered and the due discharge of one's own duty can never disturb the balance of power.

Even though the aforesaid four divisions of society naturally exist in Europe and other countries as well, there is no balance of power between them inasmuch as the divisions are not governed by definite principles. That is why the intellect now prevail, over military strength, while at other times the masses or the proletariate gets the better of the capitalist. In the Indian division of society this does not happen inasmuch as it prescribes separate duties for each group or division.

In the caste system adopted by the Ṛṣis the Brāhmaṇa occupies the highest rank; he is the law-giver of the society; it is his precepts that are respected by all. He is the teacher and guide of all; but he does not accumulate riches nor wields the rod of punishment and has no relish for luxuries and enjoyments either. Self-interest has no place in his life as it were. Spurning wealth and power and high position he lives on fruits and root and resides with his family in a forest far from the din and bustle of town life. He remains engaged day and night in the performance of penance, the practice of virtue and the acquisition of knowledge or wisdom. By dint of his remarkable power of religious austerities coupled with control of mind and the senses, endurance, forbearance etc., he acquires the eye of wisdom, which is so difficult to attain, and perceiving the truth in the transcendental light of that wisdom propagates that truth in the society in a selfless spirit through pious and morally upright men. He seeks no return for his services. He leads a most simple life, depending on whatever the society voluntarily bestows on him or on whatever he gets by way of alms. Such is the pious ideal of his life.

By using the pronoun 'Sve' twice in this verse the Lord intends to convey that a man reaches the supreme state by performing whatever duty is natural to him. That is to say, the same reward which is obtained by a Brāhmaṇa through practices such as the subjugation of his mind and senses and so on, by a Kṣatriya through exhibition of valour, governance of the people, bestowing gifts, and other such duties, and by a Vaiśya through agriculture and other such pursuits is gained by a Śūdra through acts of service. Therefore, whatever duty is natural to a man is conducive to the highest good for him.

The Kṣatriya rules over all. He punishes the offender and rewards men of good conduct. Wielding the rod of punishment he does not allow the wicked to rear their head and protects Dharma and society from evil-doers, burglars, dacoits and enemies. A Kṣatriya meets out punishment, but does not frame the laws himself. He follows the laws made by the Brāhmaṇas. It is in accordance with those laws that he levies taxes on the people and, again, it is in accordance with those very laws that he spends the revenue so collected in a systematic manner in the interest of the people. The laws are framed by the Brāhmaṇas and the stock of wealth lies in the hands of the Vaiśya. The role of the Kṣatriya is that of a constitutional manager and guardian only.

The sources of wealth, viz., trade, cattle and food—all these remain in the keeping of the Vaiśya. He produces and multiplies wealth, but not for himself. Protected by the knowledge of the Brāhmaṇa and the physical strength of the Kṣatriya he spends the wealth in the interest of all the four castes in accordance with the laws referred to above. He has no share in the administration of the state nor does he need it. For the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya never meddle with his trade, they never take his wealth with a selfish motive, on the other hand, they protect it and with the help of their wisdom and prowess manage things in such an organized way that he is able to carry on his business efficiently and unhampered. Thus he has no discontent in his heart. And he gladly accepts from the very start the leadership of the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya and also deems it necessary to do so; for therein lie his own interests. He willingly pays the tax to the king, renders services to the Brāhmaṇa and duly provides food and clothing etc., to the Śūdra with honour, fully satisfying his needs.

Now comes the Śūdra; he is naturally superior in number. In the Śūdra physical strength predominates, but intellectual capacity is a bit deficient in him. That is why physical exertion alone has been assigned to him. And for the well-being of the community physical strength is most essential too. But his physical strength is in no way less valuable than any other kind of strength. It is on the numerical strength of the Śūdra that the other three Varṇas take their stand. He is the basis or foundation. It is on the strength of the feet that the body moves. That is why the other three Varṇas look upon the Śūdra as their beloved limb. In return for his labour the Vaiśya gives him ample money, the Kṣatriya protects his wealth and family and the Brāhmaṇa shows him the path of virtue, the way to God-realization. No other Varṇa robs him of his livelihood for the realization of its own ends nor do the other Varṇas selfishly underpay him, nor do they ill-treat him taking him to be inferior or lower in rank. They all believe that every Varṇa gets its own due, that none puts another under any obligation. Yet all help one another and all advance his interests along with theirs and consider his advancement as their own and his degradation as their own downfall. Under such circumstances the Śūdra, who is superior in number, remains contented; none of the four orders is handicapped by another and none of them is subjected to ignominy at the hands of another.

Like four brothers forming a joint family, the four Varṇas remain engaged in discharging their respective and essential duties, ungrudgingly divided according to the capacity of each, for the joint advancement of their family. They add to the strength of the community by advancing the interests of one another,—the Brāhmaṇa by establishing the rule of virtues, the Kṣatriya by exerting his valour, the Vaiśya by using his material resources and the Śūdra by employing the strength of physical exertion or labour. Neither do they all seek to undertake the same work or occupation nor do they entertain any feeling of superiority or inferiority in performing separate duties. That is how balance of power is maintained between them and the cause of virtue is strengthened and promoted more and more. Such is the grand idea underlying the institution of Varṇa or the caste system.

For attaining blessedness a particular Varṇa need not adopt the duties or vocation of another.

The word 'Saṁsiddhim' in this verse does not stand for accomplishment in the shape of purity of heart or the attainment of heaven or the acquisition of supernatural powers such as that of assuming an atomic form; it denotes that highest consummation which is variously termed as God-realization, attainment of the supreme goal, of the eternal state, of the supreme state or of Brahma who is all peace. Besides this, the eternal duties of a Brāhmaṇa include the study and teaching of the Vedas and God-realization; hence it is merely preposterous to believe that these duties can lead to anything else than the supreme state.

The word 'Naraḥ' denotes every human being belonging to the four orders of society, hence the latter half of the verse expounds that evey human being is qualified to attain liberation. It further shows that for the realization of God one need not actually give up one's duties, that a man can attain God by merely continuing to perform without interruption duties appropriate to his Varṇa or grade in society and Āśrama or stage in life with the object of God-realization (XVIII.56).

In the first half of this verse the Lord proclaimed that engaged in one's own duties man attains the highest perfection. Here it may be urged that actions, as a matter of fact, bind a man; how, then, can a man who is keenly devoted to them attain the highest consummation? The Lord answers this possible query in the latter half. That is to say. He undertakes to point out unequivocally, in the next verse, the way to attain the supreme state even while engaged in those duties.

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ ४६ ॥

In this division of society into so many Varṇas or castes is based on the diversity of Guṇas or qualities and Karma or duties. This however, does not mean that the Varṇa of a man is changed by his taking to an arbitrary occupation. Varṇa has its root in birth and occupation is the principal factor in preserving its identity or individual character. In this way birth and occupation both are essential in determining one's Varṇa. Those who determine Varṇa by occupation alone do not really believe in Varṇa. If Varṇa is determined by occupation alone, there is no knowing how many times a man will have to change his Varṇa in the course of a single day. Society will no longer be governed by any order or law. There will be complete chaos. But no such thing exists in the Indian caste System or Varṇadharma as it is called. Had Varṇa been determined by occupation alone, the Lord would not have taught in the Gītā the duties of a Kṣatriya to Arjuna, who had got ready to take up the duties of a Brāhmaṇa at the commencement of the Battle. It is only in accordance with one's virtuous or sinful acts performed in previous lives that one is born in different Varṇas or castes. He who is born in a particular Varṇa or caste should perform the duties prescribed for that Varṇa alone; for that is his own Dharma or duty. And death in the performance of one's duty has been proclaimed by the Lord as conducive to blessedness—'स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः' At the same time 'Paradharma' the duty of another, has been declared as 'fraught with danger.' This is quite true; for the balance of power in society is maintained only when all perform their respective duties and then only is the Dharma of a society maintained and promoted. The abandonment of one's duty and the adoption of another's duty are harmful both for the individual and the community. It is a matter for regret that due to various causes disorganization has set in the caste system of the Aryan race. No caste or Varṇa is devoted to its own duty. There is a general tendency to act according to one's own will and the evil consequences of this tendency are becoming evident.

यतः from whom; भूतानाम् of (all) living beings; प्रवृत्तिः the emanation (has taken place); येन (and) by whom; इदम् this; सर्वम् entire (universe); ततम् (is) pervaded; तम् Him (God); स्वकर्मणा through his own (natural) duties; अभ्यर्च्य worshipping; मानवः man; सिद्धिम् (the highest) perfection; विन्दति attains.

Man attains the highest perfection by worshipping through his own natural duties Him, from whom the tide of creation has streamed forth and by whom all this universe is pervaded. (46)

In order to show how to worship God through the performance of one's duties the Lord first of all draws the attention of Arjuna, in the first half of this verse, to His all-pervading aspect along with His virtues, glory and power. The idea is that while performing each and every duty a man should bear in mind that it is from God that the whole of this universe including all animate and inanimate beings has emanated, and that it is He who pervades it, or in other words, it is God alone who has revealed Himself in the form of this universe through His Yogamāyā or deluding potency. Hence this world is identical with Him. How He pervades the whole of this universe, has been made clear in the commentary on verse 4 of Chapter IX.

God is the creator, preserver and destroyer of this universe; He is all powerful, all supporting, the director of all, the universal soul, the inner controller of all and all-pervading. The whole of this universe is His creation and it is He who has revealed Himself through His own Yogamāyā in the form of the universe; hence the whole of this universe is His. The body senses, mind and intellect of the worshipper, as well as whatever duties appropriate to his Varṇa or grade in society, such as sacrifice, charity and so on, are being done by him, also belong to Him, and the worshipper himself is His. And being the Self of all gods and other living beings, it is He who is the enjoyer of all acts (V.29). Realizing this with supreme faith and reverence and wholly giving up the feeling of mineness, attachment and the desire for fruit, he who serves the whole universe through the performance of His natural duties in accordance with the commandment of God and for the sake of His pleasure only, or in other words, he who performs his duties in a selfless spirit in the above manner with a view to gratifying all living beings, is said to worship God through the performance of his natural duties.

Any man, to whatever Varṇa or Āśrama he belongs, can attain God or the supreme Spirit in the form of the highest perfection by worshipping Him through his actions; God-realization is equally open to all. A Kṣatriya who worships God through exhibition of valour and other duties reaches the same state which is attained by a Brāhmaṇa worshipping Him through his religious practices. Such as the control of mind and senses etc., by dedicating those practices to Him. Even so a Śūdra who worships God through his acts of service reaches the same supreme goal as is reached by the Vaiśya worshipping Him through agriculture and other appropriate pursuits. Hence that is a most easy way to get rid of the shackles of Karma and realize God. Therefore, a man should practise worship of God by performing his duties in the aforesaid spirit. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

In the preceding verse it was stated that a man attains the highest perfection by worshipping God through the performance of his natural duties. This raises the question: If a Kṣatriya abstains from his stern duties such as fighting etc., and strives to attain God by earning his livelihood through a peaceful avocation such as teaching etc., or even so if a Vaiśya or a Śūdra gives up his own duties regarding them as inferior to those of the higher castes and seeks to realize God by following the vocation of a higher caste, will he be justified in doing so or not ? Anticipating this query the Lord deprecates the abandonment of one's own duty declaring it as superior to another's.

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्।
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम्॥ ४७॥

स्वनुष्ठितात् परधर्मात् than the duty of another well-performed; **विगुणः** (even) devoid of merit; **स्वधर्मः** one's own duty; **श्रेयान्** (is) better; **स्वभावनियतम् कर्म** the duty ordained by his own nature; **कुर्वन्** performing; **किल्बिषम्** sin; **न** not; **आप्नोति** (man) incurs.

Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another well-performed; for performing the duty ordained by his own nature man does not incur sin. (47)

A 'well-performed' duty is that which is accomplished with due attention to all its details. The Lord, however, uses the qualification 'Viguṇaḥ' with 'Svadharmaḥ'; hence 'Paradharmāt' should be taken by implication to be qualified by some such adjective as 'Possessed of merit.' Therefore, the words "Svanuṣṭhitāt paradharmāt" should be taken to mean a duty which, though possessed of merit and performed with scrupulous care, is not prescribed for the performer, but only for others. The special duties of a Brāhmaṇa are marked by a larger proportion of noble virtues such as non-violence etc., than the duties of a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya and a Śūdra; the duties pertaining to the order of Saṁnyāsa possess more merits than those pertaining to the life of a householder; even so the duties of a Vaiśya and a Kṣatriya are possessed of greater merit than the duties of a Śūdra. But just as it is spiritually beneficial for a wife to serve her husband in any case, even though he has an ugly appearance and is devoid of merit, even so that duty alone which has been prescribed for a man is good for him, no matter if it is devoid of merit on the face of it and even though it has not been fully acomplished in all its details. This is what is conveyed by the first half of this verse.

That duty alone which has been prescribed for a man with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances etc., is 'Svadharma' or natural duty for him. Lying, duplicity, thieving, violence, cheating, adultery and other prohibited acts are 'Svadharma' for none; and actions motivated by desire too are binding on none. Hence they have not been recognized as the Svadharma of any. Other than these, those that have been declared as the special duties attaching to a particular Varṇa or Āśrama, and for which men belonging to other Varṇas and Āśramas are not eligible, are the exclusive Svadharma of men belonging to that particular Varṇa or Āśrama; while those duties which have been declared as open to every Dvija or member of the twice-born classes, viz., the

study of the Vedas and the performance of sacrifices etc., are the Svadharma of the twice-born classes. Again, those duties of a general or universal character for which men and women of all classes and Āśramas are eligible, viz., Devotion to God, truthfulness, service of one's parents, control of the senses, chastity and modesty etc., are the Svadharma of all.

The adjective 'Viguṇaḥ' signifies deficiency of merit. The natural duty of a Kṣatriya is to engage in a conflict, and punish the wicked etc. The duties of a Vaiśya such as agriculture etc., are likewise characterized by a preponderance of evils like destruction of life and so on; hence, when compared to the peaceful duties of a Brāhmaṇa, they too are devoid of merit. And as for the duties of a Śūdra, they are inferior even to those of a Vaiśya and a Kṣatriya. Besides this the omission of a particular item or detail during the performance of a duty also constitutes a defect or imperfection.

A duty which has been prescribed by the Śāstras for a man belonging to a particular Varṇa or Āśrama in accordance with his temperament is 'Svabhāvaniyata' for him. Hence the words 'Svabhāvaniyataṁ Karma' carry the same idea as is conveyed by 'Svadharma'. The man who performs such duty is not held responsible for the sins of violence etc. that are incidentally committed during the lawful discharge of his duty; whereas by adopting another's duty one incurs the sin of robbing another of his means of livelihood even though the duty adopted is comparatively free from evils, such as violence etc. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत्।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः॥ ४८॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; **सदोषम् अपि** though tainted with blemish; **सहजम् कर्म** one's innate duty; **न त्यजेत्** (one) should not abandon; **हि** because; **धूमेन** in smoke; **अग्निः इव** as fire (is enveloped); **सर्वारम्भाः** all undertakings; **दोषेण** with demerit; **आवृताः** are clouded.

Therefore, Arjuna, one should not abandon one's innate duty, even though it may be tainted with blemish; for even as fire is enveloped in smoke, all undertakings are clouded with demerit. (48)

Those duties alone which have been prescribed for a particular man with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, are 'Sahaja' or innate for him. Therefore, the words 'Sahajam Karma' in this verse refer to those very duties or actions which have been variously termed in the course of this chapter as 'Svadharma', 'Svakarma', 'Niyata Karma', 'Svabhāvaniyata Karma' and 'Svabhāvaja Karma'.

The abandonment of such innate duties as are possessed of excellent virtues being out of the question, even those prescribed and legitimate duties which ordinarily appear as tainted with evils like violence etc., are not really defective, though appearing as such, and hence should not be given up. That is to say, they too should be duly performed; for far from incurring sin through their performance one is liable to be held guilty for renouncing them. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

Just as fire is mixed with smoke, which

cannot be wholly separated from it, even so every undertaking is tainted with demerit. Every form of activity does involve in one way or other destruction of life in some form; for even in the case of those belonging to the order of recluses activities such as answering the calls of nature, bathing and begging alms from door to door involve destruction of life in some measure, and sacrifice and other acts of the Brāhmaṇa too involve destruction of small creatures due to the elaborate ritual. Therefore, ordinarily speaking, the duties of any Varṇa or Āśrama whatsoever are not altogether free from blemish; and none can help doing some work (III.5). Hence even after giving up his own duty a man must do some work; and whatever he does will be contaminated with sin. That is why a man must not give up his own duty under the belief that a particular action or duty is inferior or tainted with evil; on the other hand, he should rightly perform it renouncing the evils of mineness, attachment and the desire for fruit. By doing so a man's heart gets purified and he speedily attains God.

In order to expound the truth of Tyāga and Saṁnyāsa in response to Arjuna's enquiry, the Lord discussed the subject of Tyāga in verses 4 to 12 and expounded Saṁnyāsa or the path of Knowledge in verses 13 to 40 above. Then in order to enlighten Arjuna on the truth relating to Tyāga, which is only another name for Karmayoga or the path of Action, He discussed from verse 41 up to the preceding verse the nature of innate actions and their obligatory character, and showing the alliance of Bhakti with Karmayoga pointed out God-realization as its reward. But while on the subject of Saṁnyāsa the Lord did not mention its reward, nor did He point out how to practise Sāṅkhyayoga along with worship disclaiming the doership of actions. Therefore, in order to point out the method and reward of carrying this practice in seclusion with discrimination and dispassion, the Lord resumes the discussion of Sāṅkhyayoga.

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां सन्न्यासेनाधिगच्छति॥ ४९॥

सर्वत्र everywhere; **असक्तबुद्धिः** he whose intellect is unattached; **विगतस्पृहः** who is free from thirst for enjoyment; **जितात्मा** who has subdued his mind; **सन्न्यासेन** through Sāṅkhyayoga (the path of Knowledge); **परमाम् नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिम्** the consummation of actionlessness; **अधिगच्छति** attains.

He whose intellect is unattached everywhere, whose thirst for enjoyment has altogether disappeared and who has subdued his mind, reaches through Sāṅkhyayoga (the path of Knowledge) the consummation of actionlessness. (49)

'Sarvatra Asaktabuddhiḥ' is he whose attachment for the body including the mind and the senses, for the activities performed by them as well as for all enjoyments and for the whole universe including animate and inanimate beings has altogether disappeared,—in other words, whose mind and intellect no longer entertain a partiality or attraction for anything. He whose thirst for enjoyment has wholly ceased, who has no need for any worldly object, is referred to here as 'Vigataspṛhaḥ'; and Jitātmā is he whose mind and senses stand subdued. The use

of these three compound adjectives is intended to point out those who are qualified for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga. The idea is what he alone who is endowed with these three qualifications can attain true knowledge of God through the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga.

The word 'Saṁnyāsena' in this verse stands for Jñānayoga or the path of Knowledge. It is also called Saṁnyāsayoga. The true nature of this discipline has been discussed in verses 51 to 53 below, 'Paramām Naiṣkarmyasiddhim' means securing freedom from the bondage of Karma and attaining ture knowledge of God who is beyond all change and who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, as a result of this practice.

In the above verse it is stated that one attains the highest state of actionlessness through Saṁnyāsa; this leads one to enquire what is the true nature of Saṁnyāsa (Sāṅkhyayoga) and through what process one attains the consummation of actionlessness and then Brahma Itself. Therefore, undertaking to discuss all these points the Lord invites Arjuna to hear His exposition.

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे।
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा॥५०॥

या which (is); ज्ञानस्य of Jñānayoga or the path of Knowledge; परा highest; निष्ठा consummation; सिद्धिम् that state of actionlessness; यथा through which (process); प्राप्तः having attained; ब्रह्म Brahma or the Absolute; आप्नोति (man) attains; तथा that (method); कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī; समासेन in brief; एव only; मे from Me; निबोध know.

Arjuna, know from Me only briefly the process through which man having attained actionlessness, which is the highest consummation of Jñānayoga (the path of Knowledge), reaches Brahma. (50)

The substantive 'Niṣthā', qualified by the adjective 'Parā', denotes the final stage of Jñānayoga (the path of Knowledge), which is also termed as Parā Bhakti and Tattvajñāna (the realization of Truth), which is the limit of all Sādhanās or spiritual discipline. The sum total of practices forming part of the discipline of Knowledge is called 'Jñānaniṣthā' and Tattvajñāna, or the realization of Truth, which is the reward of all such practices, is called the 'Parā Niṣthā of Knowledge'.

The 'Siddhi' referred to in this verse is the same as the 'Naiṣkarmyasiddhi' mentioned in the preceding verse; it has been spoken of as the 'Parā Niṣthā' of Jñāna in the present verse and as Parā Bhakti in verse 54 below.

The realization of Brahma or the Absolute follows. Immediately after the attainment of this 'Siddhi'. This is what is indicated in the first half of this verse.

The word 'Brahma' stands for the eternal and immutable supreme Spirit or the Absolute, which is without form and attributes and which is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. And the attainment of Brahma consists in merging one's identity in It through the realization of Truth as mentioned in verse 55 below.

As undertaken in the preceding verse, the Lord now describes Jñānayoga in all its details in the following three verses.

बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च।
शब्दादीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च॥ ५१॥
विविक्तसेवी लघ्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः।
ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः॥ ५२॥
अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम्।
विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते॥ ५३॥

विशुद्धया बुद्ध्या with an untarnished intellect; युक्तः endowed; लघ्वाशी partaking of a light, Sāttvika and regulated diet; शब्दादीन् विषयान् sound and other objects of sense; त्यक्त्वा turning one's back on; विविक्तसेवी living in a lonely and undefiled place; धृत्या through firmness (of a Sāttvika type); आत्मानम् the mind and senses; नियम्य restraining; यतवाक्कायमानसः having controlled the mind, speech and body; रागद्वेषौ attraction and aversion; व्युदस्य wiping out; वैराग्यम् dispassion; समुपाश्रितः taking a firm stand on; च and; अहङ्कारम् egotism; बलम् violence; दर्पम् arrogance; कामम् lust; क्रोधम् anger; च and; परिग्रहम् luxuries; विमुच्य giving up; नित्यम् ever; ध्यानयोगपरः devoted to the Yoga of meditation; निर्ममः devoid of the feeling of meum; शान्तः tranquil of heart, calm; ब्रह्मभूयाय for oneness with Brahma (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss); कल्पते becomes fit.

Endowed with an untarnished intellect and partaking of a light, Sāttvika and regulated diet, living in a lonely and undefiled place having rejected sound and other objects of sense, having controlled the mind, speech and body by restraining the mind and senses through firmness of a Sāttvika type, taking a resolute stand on dispassion, after having completely got rid of attraction and aversion and remaining ever devoted to the Yoga of meditation having given up egotism, violence, arrogance, lust, anger and luxuries devoid of the feeling of meum and tranquil of heart,—such a man becomes qualified for oneness with Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. (51,52,53)

An intellect which retains no trace of sins incurred in previous lives is referred to here by the words 'Viśuddhayā Buddhyā', and he who is possessed of such a purified intellect is called 'Buddhyā viśuddhayā yuktaḥ'.

'Laghvāśī' is he who is regulated in diet (VI.17), that is to say, who takes articles of food which are suitable for spiritual practice, easily digestible and Sāttvika in character (XVII.8) and whose diet is suited to his nature, needs and digestive capacity, governed by certain rules and fixed in quantity.

The word 'Viṣayān' in this verse stands for all worldly pleasures of sense. The man referred to in this verse does not waste his precious time in the enjoyment of such pleasures. In order to carry on uninterrupted spiritual practice he take up his residence on a river bank, in a place of worship, forest or mountain cave or any other such place, which has a holy atmosphere, is not frequented by many, is naturally secluded and clean or has been cleaned by sweeping and washing. This is what is meant by

the expressions 'Śabdādīn viṣayān tyaktvā' and 'Viviktasevī'.

Through unwavering firmness as defined in verse 33 above, and with irreproachable persistence he empties his mind of all thoughts of mundane objects and does not allow the senses to run after worldly enjoyments. This is what is meant by the phrase 'Dhṛtyā ātmānam niyamya'. And through such discipline he succeeds in subduing the mind, senses and body—robs them of their freedom as well as of their capacity to unsettle the intellect. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the compound adjective 'Yatavākkāyamānasaḥ'.

Attraction and aversion lie hidden in all enjoyments of sense, they are great enemies of the Sādhaka (III.34). Therefore, wiping out from one's mind all traces of attraction or aversion for any enjoyment of this world or the next, or for any living being, object, activity or occurrence—this is what is meant by the phrase 'Rāgadveṣau vyudasya'; and he who remains ever merged in dispassion is said to have taken a firm stand on Vairāgya—'Vairāgyam samupāśritaḥ'.

'Ahaṅkāra' is the feeling of identification with one's body, senses and mind; it is due to this that man comes to regard himself as the doer in relation to what is being done by the mind, intellect and body. Therefore, completely getting rid of this feeling of self-identification with the body is what is meant by giving up egotism. The audacity to bring others under one's sway in a wrongful manner through coercion is called 'Balam' or violence; vain consciousness of one's riches, large family, learning, birth and physical strength etc., is known as 'Darpa' or arrogance; the longing for obtaining the enjoyments of this world and the next is spoken of as 'Kāma'; the feeling of excitement or provocation aroused in the mind when somebody acts against one's will or behaves wrongfully,—which manifests itself in the form of blood-shot eyes, the throbbing of lips, a burning sensation in the heart and a distortion of the face, is termed as 'Krodha'. The means of enjoyment taken together are known as 'Parigraha'; hence giving up 'Parigraha' primarily means actually shunning all luxuries or objects of enjoyment. Broadly speaking, however, even he who does accumulate objects, but not with the idea of enjoying them, may be indirectly said to renounce 'Parigraha'.

Giving up all these and suspending the function of the mind and senses through the Sāttvika form of Dhṛti and completely eliminating all worldly thoughts, a Sāṅkhyayogī constantly contemplates on Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, as his own self (VI.25). He continues to dwell on the divine truth or being of God at all times—while awake or asleep, sitting or standing, and even while performing unavoidable bodily functions such as answering the calls of nature, bathing, eating and drinking an so on,—and regards this as his supreme and paramount duty. This is what is meant by remaining devoted to the Yoga of meditation.

'Nirmamaḥ' is he who completely renounces the feeling of 'mine' in respect of the body including the mind and senses, in respect of all living beings, actions and enjoyments and even with regard to one's birth, race, nationality, grade in society and stage in life—who ceases to distinguish an object, activity or living being as his own or alien.

As a result of the above practices, the mind of the Sāṅkhyayogī is no longer distracted by worldly thoughts and is ever pervaded by an unruffled calm and pure, Sāttvika joy. The quietist who is possessed

of such a tranquil mind is called 'Śāntaḥ'.

A man who is endowed with all these accomplishments not only becomes eligible for oneness with Brahma but immediately becomes one with the Absolute. That is to say, the distinction between the soul and the Oversoul no longer exists in his eyes and the realization that he is no other than Brahma,—who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified,—gets firmly rooted in him. In that state he beholds his own self as projected in the whole universe and the whole universe as conceived in his own being (VI.29).

Having thus discussed the true nature of Saṁnyāsa or Sāṅkhyayoga (the path of Knowledge) in all its details, the Lord now points out the marks of the Yogī who has become one with Brahma through the practice of that discipline, and tells us how he reaches the culmination of Jñānayoga, termed as Parā Bhakti.

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति।
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम्॥ ५४॥

ब्रह्मभूतः the Sāṅkhyayogī who has become one with Brahma (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified); प्रसन्नात्मा cheerful in mind; न no longer; शोचति grieves (for anyone); न nor; काङ्क्षति craves (for anything); सर्वेषु भूतेषु to all beings; समः the same; पराम् मद्भक्तिम् supreme devotion to Me; लभते (he) attains.

Established in identity with Brahma (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified); and cheerful in mind, the Sāṅkhyayogī no longer grieves nor craves for anything. The same to all beings, such a Yogī attains supreme devotion to Me. (54)

The compound word 'Brahmabhūtaḥ' refers to the Sāṅkhyayogī who has become one with the Absolute, in whose eye everything other than Brahma ceases to exist, who is ever irrevocably established in identity with God according to the spirit of the great formulas "I am Brahma" (*Bṛh. Up.*, I. iv.10), "I am That" and so on. Verse 24 of Chapter V and verse 27 of Chapter VI also speak of the Yogī who has reached this state as 'Brahmabhūta'.

'Prasannātmā' is he whose mind is sinless, free from impurities and unruffled, and ever remains merged in pure delight. The use of this adjective is intended to convey that everything other than Brahma having ceased to exist in the eyes of the man who has attained oneness with Brahma, his mind is ever calm and never gets excited on any account.

The words 'Na śocati na kāṅkṣati' represent the distinguishing marks of the Yogī who has attained oneness with Brahma. The idea is that having come to recognize Brahma in everything such a Yogī no longer differentiates any object from himself nor regards anything as attractive nor entertains the feeling of 'mine' with regard to anything. That is why it makes no difference to him when anyone gets united with or disjoined from the body etc. Hence on no account and in no circumstance whatsoever does he give way to grief or anxiety to the least degree. And he gets sated inasmuch as he ceases to veiw anything as other than Brahma; hence he craves for nothing.

The adjectival phrase 'Sarveṣu bhūteṣu samaḥ' is intended to show his feeling of

non-differentiation towards all beings. The idea is that the Sāṅkhyayogī referred to above does not view any living being as other than himself; hence he ceases to differentiate one from another. He comes to develop the feeling of oneness towards all. This very idea has been brought out in verse 29 of Chapter VI by the words 'Sarvatra samadarśanaḥ'.

The compound word 'Madbhaktim', qualified by the adjective 'Parām', denotes that which is the fruit of Jñānayoga and which is also termed as the culmination of Jñāna and the realization of Truth; for having revealed the true nature of God it unites one with Him.

Declaring thus that the Sāṅkhyayogī who has become one with Brahma attains 'Parā Bhakti', the Lord now points out its reward.

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः।
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम्॥ ५५॥

भक्त्या through (that) devotion; माम् Me (the supreme Spirit); यः what (I am); च and; यावान् of what magnitude; अस्मि (I); तत्त्वतः in truth; अभिजानाति comes to know; ततः (and) through that (devotion); माम् Me; तत्त्वतः in reality; ज्ञात्वा having known; तदनन्तरम् immediately; विशते enters (into My being).

Through that supreme devotion he comes to know Me in reality, what and how great I am; and thereby knowing Me in essence he forthwith enters into My being. (55)

The word 'Bhaktyā' in this verse refers to the same realization of Truth which has been spoken of as 'Parām madbhaktim' in the preceding verse and as the culmination of knowledge in verse 50. This is the fruit of Jñānayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Karmayoga, Dhyānayoga and all other disciplines; it is through this that all Sādhakas attain true knowledge of God and realize God Himself. It is in order to point out the identity of the fruit of all disciplines that the word 'Bhaktyā' has been used in this context dealing with Jñānayoga.

Synchronously with the attainment of this Parā Bhakti, which is only another name for the realization of Truth, the Sāṅkhyayogī referred to above comes to know the real character of God with the help of that realization. The nature of His absolute, formless aspect, His qualified formless aspect as well as of His qualified aspect with form, and how he emerges with a form from the formless state and how He withdraws His form and reverts to the formless state—all this becomes known to him. That is why diversity of any kind ceases to exist in his eyes. It is in order to reveal the identity of God in His qualified aspect with the absolute, formless Brahma, attained through the practice of Jñānayoga or the discipline of Knowledge, that the Lord has used the personal pronoun 'Mām'.

The indeclinable 'Tataḥ' implies cause. God-realization takes place as soon as the essential character or true nature of God is known—there is no interval or lapse of time between the two events; hence the word has not been interpreted to mean 'thereafter'. The word 'Tataḥ' refers to a cause which forms the subject of discussion; and it was also necessary to repeat the cause alongwith

the verb 'Jñātvā'; hence 'Tataḥ' should be taken to refer to the 'Parā Bhakti' mentioned in the first half of the verse.

The compound adverb 'Tadanantaram', even though it follows the verb 'Jñātvā', does not imply sequence of time. The use of the verb 'Jñātvā (having known) no doubt gives one the impression that the Sāṅkhyayogī enters into the being of God some time after realizing the truth about Him. But it is in order to remove this impression that the Lord uses the word 'Tadanantaram'. The idea is that there is no interval or lapse of time between the knowledge of the true nature of God and His own realization; true knowledge of His essential character and entering into His being—both come together. God, being the Self of all, is not really something unattained by any; therefore, He is realized as soon as His reality is known. Hence it is in order to bring out this idea that the word 'Tadanantaram', has been taken to mean 'immediately' or 'at once'. For the verb 'Jñātvā' was enough to denote sequence of time; the use of the word 'Tadanantaram' would, therefore, become superfluous or redundant if it were taken in that sense.

Having thus expounded severally the truth relating to Tyāga or Karmayoga on the one hand and that of Saṁnyāsa or Sāṅkhyayoga on the other in response to the enquiry of Arjuna, the Lord concluded here the discussion of Sāṅkhyayoga. He however, did not tell him which of the two disciplines should be followed by him. Therefore, with a view to inducing him to adopt Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti, the Lord now glorifies Karmayoga dominated by Bhakti.

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः।
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम्॥ ५६॥

मद्व्यपाश्रयः (the Karmayogī) who has taken refuge in Me; सर्वकर्माणि all (his) duties; सदा ever; कुर्वाणः performing; अपि even; मत्प्रसादात् by My grace; शाश्वतम् अव्ययम् पदम् the eternal, imperishable supreme state or abode; अवाप्नोति attains.

The Karmayogī, however, who depends on Me, attains by My grace the eternal, imperishable state, even though performing all actions. (56)

The compound adjective 'Mad-vyapāśrayaḥ' in this verse refers to the man who practises Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti. Such a Karmayogī gives up dependence on all actions and their fruit in the shape of all enjoyments and takes refuge in God alone. Having dedicated his body, including the mind and senses, and all its activities as well as their fruit to God, he no longer treats them as his own, withdraws his attachment from them and ceases to hanker for anything, and remains exclusively devoted to Him. He looks upon God as his supreme goal, the highest object of his love, his greatest well-wisher, chief supporter and sole riches, and remains cheerful under all circumstances taking them to be a dispensation of God. That is to say, he never rejoices nor grieves over the appearance or disappearance of any worldly object or over any event and ever depends on God. Whatever he does according to His behest, for His Pleasure, and under His guidance and inspiration regarding himself as a mere instrument and working just as he is made to work, and views himself as entirely

subject to His control. All this is covered by the adjective 'Madvyapāśrayaḥ'.

The compound word 'Sarvakarmāṇi' covers all duties that have been prescribed in the Śāstras with due regard to the Varṇa and Āśrama of an individual, that have been referred to above by the terms 'Niyatam Karma' and 'Svabhāvajam Karma' and which conform to the commandments and directions of God.

The use of the particle 'Api' is intended to glorify the man who practises Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti, and to show that Karmayoga is easy to practise. The idea is that while the Sāṅkhyayogī realizes God by renouncing all luxuries and enjoyments and practising constant meditation on God in a lonely place, the Karmayogī who has taken refuge in God realizes the same God even while performing all duties appropriate to his Varṇa or grade in society and Āśrama or stage in life. There is no disparity whatsoever in the fruit of the two disciplines.

The substantive 'Padam' qualified by the adjectives 'Śāśvatam' and 'Avyayam', stands for the almighty and all-supporting God, who has existed from eternity and remains for ever, who never ceases to be, and who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. He has been called 'Padam' in order to show that He alone is the supreme goal. The same principle which has been termed as 'Saṁsiddhi' in verse 45 above, as 'Siddhi' in the next verse and as 'Mām' or God in verse 55 above has been referred to in the present verse as the eternal, imperishable state. The idea that the same truth has been called by different names. Impressed and pleased with the sentiment of the man practising Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti, the Lord confers on him of His own accord the Yoga of wisdom known as Parā Bhakti (X.10); realizing the true nature of God through that Buddhiyoga the devotee becomes one with or gets merged in God, who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

Extolling thus the man who practises Karmayoga with the element of Bhakti preponderating in it, the Lord now commands Arjuna to become such a Karmayogī.

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मत्परः।
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव॥ ५७॥

सर्वकर्माणि all duties or actions; चेतसा mentally; मयि to Me; सन्न्यस्य resigning; बुद्धियोगम् Yoga in the form of even-mindedness; उपाश्रित्य (and) adopting; मत्परः exclusively devoted to Me; सततम् मच्चित्तः with your mind constantly given to Me; भव be.

Mentally resigning all your duties to Me, and taking recourse to Yoga in the form of even-mindedness, be solely devoted to Me and constantly give your mind to Me. (57)

The man who resigns all his actions to God feels that his mind, senses and body, the activities performed by them and everything in the world belong to Him, and accordingly ceases to look upon any of these as his own, withdraws attachment from them and no longer craves for anything. He believes that he is incapable of doing anything, that it is God who infuses the necessary energy into him and gets everything done

by him according to His own will, while he does nothing himself. And believing thus he continues to perform all actions according to His behest, for His sake and under His guidance and inspiration acting as a mere instrument or puppet.

Viewing success and failure, joy and sorrow, gain and loss and similarly objects and living beings as alike is what is referred to here as Buddhiyoga. Therefore, believing that whatever happens in the world is controlled by the will and promptings of God, he who no longer entertains the discriminative feelings of attraction, and aversion, delight and grief, etc., in respect of the various objects, living beings and occurrences, and remains equipoised under all circumstances, is said to have taken recourse to the Yoga of equanimity.

He who is exclusively devoted to God ('Matparaḥ') looks upon Him as his supreme goal, highest asylum, greatest wellwisher, dearest object of love and chief support. He is ever contented with His dispensation and remains devoted to practices of God-realization.

Even so 'Maccittaḥ' is he who has his mind and intellect irrevocably fastened on God. Conceiving not the least attachment for anyone other than God, he remains solely engaged in thinking of God in terms of exclusive love. Even a moment's gap in the thought of God becomes unbearable to him. He continues to perceive Him with his mind at all times, even while he is sitting or standing, walking or moving from one place to another, eating or drinking, dreaming or awake, and doing everything else. This is what Arjuna has been asked to do in the concluding verse of Chapter IX as also in verse 65 of the present chapter by the wrods "Manmanā bhava."

Having thus commanded Arjuna to practise Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti, the Lord now points out to him the reward of obeying His command and shows what great harm will befall him in the event of his not obeying Him.

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि।
अथ चेत्त्वमहङ्कारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि॥ ५८॥

मच्चित्तः with your mind given to Me (in the aforesaid manner); त्वम् you; मत्प्रसादात् by My grace; सर्वदुर्गाणि all difficulties; तरिष्यसि you shall tide over; अथ and; चेत् if; अहङ्कारात् from egotism; न श्रोष्यसि you will not listen; विनङ्क्ष्यसि you will be lost.

With your mind thus given to Me, you shall tide over all difficulties by My grace. And if, from egotism, you will not listen, you will be lost. (58)

Having resigned all his actions to God in the manner suggested above, and constantly fixing his mind on Him, Arjuna would be required to do nothing more. By the Lord's grace all his sorrows in this world as well as in the next would be easily obviated. Rid of all vices and evil propensities, he would be exempted for ever from the great ordeal in the shape of birth and death and would attain God, who is eternal Bliss solidified. This is what the Lord seeks to convey in the first half of this verse.

Arjuna was a devotee and beloved friend of the Lord; he was, therefore, sure to obey Him. The Lord, however, warned Arjuna that just as obedience to Him was highly beneficial, disobedience to Him involved great risk; therefore, if from self-

conceit Arjuna did not obey the Lord and acted according to his own will he was doomed. In that case he would have no real peace or joy in this world or the next and lapsing from his duty he would fall from the spiritual level already attained by him. This is what the Lord seeks to impress on Arjuna in the latter half of the verse.

The Lord has on a previous occasion acknowledged Arjuna as his devotee (IV.3) and has further proclaimed that his devotee never falls (IX.31). In the present verse, however, He warns Arjuna against a fall. How is this to be reconciled with His former estimation of Arjuna ? In this connection it may be submitted that the Lord has already met this objection by the use of the conditional conjunction 'Cet'. It is no doubt an axiomatic truth that a devotee of God never falls; and it is equally true that Arjuna was supremely devoted to the Lord. That he should not listen to the Lord, and should disobey Him, was, therefore, something out of the question. Nevertheless, should he prove so selfconceited as to disobey Him, he could no longer be counted as a devotee of God, and in that eventuality it was but reasonable that he should fall.

In the preceding verse the Lord plainly told Arjuna that he was sure to fall if he proved conceited enough to disobey Him. In support of this very statement the Lord now points out in the following two verses that his resolve was not a sound one.

यदहङ्कारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे।
मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति॥ ५९॥

यत् if; अहङ्कारम् egotism; आश्रित्य taking your stand on; न योत्स्ये I will not fight; इति thus; मन्यसे you think; ते your; एषः this; व्यवसायः resolve; मिथ्या (is) vain; प्रकृतिः nature; त्वाम् you; नियोक्ष्यति drive (to the act).

If, taking your stand on egotism, you think "I will not fight", vain is this resolve of yours; nature will drive you to the act. (59)

Commanded by the Lord on a previous occasion to fight (II.3), Arjuna bluntly said, "I will not fight" (II.9). The first half of the present verse has reference to that refusal on the part of Arjuna. The idea is that the resolve of Arjuna not to fight was nothing but a display of vanity on his part: he was not free to desist from war. It was, therefore, most undesirable that Arjuna should thus allow himself to be possessed by egotism born of ignorance, and should accordingly regard himself as wise, competent and free and take upon himself on the strength of such egotism the responsibility of accomplishing a particular act in a particular way and make up his mind to desist from a particular course of action. This is what the Lord seeks to impress upon Arjuna in the first half of this verse.

By denouncing Arjuna's resolve as a mere display of his vanity the Lord seeks to convey that he would not be able to stick to his resolve, *i.e.,* he could not remain aloof from war; for he was not free to act, he was subject to his nature.

The word 'Prakṛti' in this verse denotes the sum-total of tendencies formed as a result of actions performed through a number of lives, and manifesting themselves in the current life of an individual in the form of temperament or disposition; it is also called the nature of an individual.

It is this nature that determines the birth of a soul in a community endowed with an aptitude for a particular type of actions; and it is under the influence of this nature that different individuals are inclined towards diverse types of actions. The words 'Prakṛtiḥ twām niyokṣyati' are, therefore, intended to impress upon Arjuna that the nature which has caused his birth in the Kṣatriya race would perforce drive him even against his will to war. To put up a heroic fight when the occasion demanded it and not to lose heart or flee from a battle was his natural duty; hence Arjuna could not help performing his duty, he needs must fight. What Arjuna has been told about war on account of his being a Kṣatriya should be understood by members of other castes to apply to their own natural duties.

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा।
कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत्॥ ६०॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; **यत्** (the action) which; **मोहात्** through ignorance; **कर्तुम्** to do; **न इच्छसि** you are not willing; **तत्** that; **अपि** too; **स्वेन स्वभावजेन कर्मणा** by your own past action born of your nature; **निबद्धः** bound; **अवशः** helplessly; **करिष्यसि** you will do.

That action too which you are not willing to undertake through ignorance,— bound by your own duty born of your nature, you will helplessly perform. (60)

Kuntī, Arjuna's mother, was a very brave lady; while sending her message through Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself she incited the Pāṇḍavas to war. Therefore, by addressing Arjuna as Kuntī's son, He seeks to impress on him that being the son of a brave mother and a heroic soul himself, he would not be able to keep aloof from war.

Arjuna was a Kṣatriya, fighting was his natural duty; hence it was not sinful for him to participate in war. Under such circumstances, it was in no way desirable for him to seek to avoid it. That he was nevertheless unwilling to perform his natural duty in the shape of fighting in a righteous cause showed nothing but want of thought on his part; otherwise there was no sufficient ground for his shirking the duty. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by the words 'Kartum na icchasi yat mohāt'.

Again, fighting was a natural duty with Arjuna; hence he was bound by it, i.e., intimately connected with it. Under such circumstances, it would drag him perforce to it even against his will and impelled by his nature he would have to do it. Therefore, if he did it as the Lord bade him do, i.e., according to the process laid down in verse 57 above, Arjuna would be free from the bondage of Karma and realize the Lord; or else being caught in the meshes of attraction and aversion he would continue to drift in the ocean of mundane existence in the form of birth and death. This is what the Lord seeks to impress on Arjuna in the present verse.

The idea is that a man who is being carried away by the current of a river can never be able to cross it by forcing his way against the current; while he who moves along the current by catching hold of a barge or a log of wood or by floating on the surface of water through the art of swimming reaches the bank and even goes beyond it. Similarly, the man who having been caught in the stream of Prakṛti struggles

against it, i.e., wilfully neglects his duties, cannot go beyond Nature, but on the other hand gets involved in it more and more; while he who betaking himself to God or to Karmayoga (the path of Action) or rising above Prakṛti according to the process of Jñānayoga, continues to perform duties according to his nature, is freed from the bondage of Karma and transcends Prakṛti, i.e., realizes God.

In the foregoing verses man has been declared as dependent on his nature in the matter of performing actions. Here one may ask: Prakṛti or nature is unconscious, how can it bring anyone under its sway ? The Lord, therefore, says:—

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया॥ ६१॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; यन्त्रारूढानि mounted on the vehicle of the body; सर्वभूतानि all living beings; ईश्वरः God (who is their inner controller); मायया by His illusive power; भ्रामयन् turning round and round (according to their respective Karmas); सर्वभूतानाम् of all creatures; हृद्देशे in the heart; तिष्ठति abides.

Arjuna, God abides in the heart of all creatures, causing them to revolve according to their Karma by His illusive power, seated as those beings are in the vehicle of the body. (61)

Though the man who is seated in a vehicle moves not himself, the motion of the vehicle imparts locomotion to him; even so though the Self is immovable—is really speaking wholly beyond all activity,—yet, being identified with a body due to ignorance that has existed from time without beginning, the activity of the body is attributed to the Soul. This is what the Lord means by figuratively speaking of the body as a vehicle.

The driver who propels a vehicle remains in the vehicle himself; even so God dwells in the heart of all creatures and it is while seated in their heart that He causes them to revolve according to their Karma. Hence no decree of God is liable to the least error; for all-powerful, all-pervading and omniscient as He is, He is fully aware of all the doings of those creatures. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

In order to reward or punish the various Jīvas or embodied souls according to the doings of their previous lives God causes them to be born in different species. He unites them with or disjoins them from various objects, activities and living beings and urges them to newer forms of activity in accordance with their nature. This is how God causes living beings to revolve through His Māyā.

This raises the question of freedom of will. Is man free to act according to his will or does he depend for his actions on any other agency ? If he is dependent, what is the nature of his dependence and on whom does he depend—on his own nature or on Prakṛti or God ? For at one place man has been declared free as having the right to act (II.47), and at another place as subject to his individual nature (III.33) and at a third place as dependent on God (X.8). In this very chapter he has been declared as dependent on or subject to his own peculiar nature in verses 59 and 60 and in the present

verse as dependent on God. This point evidently needs elucidation.

In this connection it may be submitted that man is neither free to act nor to abstain from action. That is why it has been said that no living being can remain inactive even for a moment (III.5). Even the statement that man has the right to act is intended not to declare him free but only to proclaim him as dependent; for he has thereby been pronounced as incapable of giving up action. Now as regards the agency on which he depends, our submission is that it is just the same to call him as dependent on Prakṛti, on his own nature or on God. For, as a matter of fact, Prakṛti and nature are synonymous terms; and as for God, He urges the different Jīvas or embodied souls to action through His illusive power according to their individual nature in quite an unconcerned way, i.e., remaining altogether unaffected or unattached. Therefore, to call a man dependent on God is just the same as to declare him subject to his own nature. In the alternative case it is God who is the lord and director of Prakṛti, so that even to call a man as subject to his own nature is tantamount to calling him dependent on God.

Here it may be asked: If man is absolutely dependent, what is the way of redeeming him and what need is there for scriptures determining what a man should do and what he should not. Our reply to this question is that the Śāstras are not intended to divert a man from his natural duties or to urge him to acts which are antagonistic to his nature. Their intention is to deter him from wrongful acts which he is liable to commit under the impulse of likes and dislikes while discharging his duties, and to encourage him to perform his duties in a righteous spirit. Hence, though bound by his own nature in performing actions, he is not so fettered in the matter of reforming this nature. Therefore, waking up as a result of the teachings of the Śāstras and holy men, if he takes refuge in Almighty God, who is the director of Prakṛti, and, giving up morbid feelings such as those of attraction and aversion etc., rightly performs his natural duties in a disinterested spirit according to the scriptural injunctions, he can surely be redeemed.

In the preceding verse it has been proved that man is not free to abandon his duties, he is driven to his natural duties under the prompting of his own nature; for Almighty God, who remains seated in the heart of all as their inner controller, causes all living beings to revolve according to their own nature and it is not possible for man to resist His prompting. The question, therefore, arises: If such is the case, what should a man do in order to get rid of the bondage of Karma and attain supreme peace ? Thereupon the Lord prescribes the duty for Arjuna in the following verse:—

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम्॥ ६२॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata; सर्वभावेन with all your being; तम् Him (God); एव alone; शरणम् गच्छ take refuge in; तत्प्रसादात् by His mere grace; पराम् शान्तिम् supreme peace; शाश्वतम् स्थानम् (and) the eternal state; प्राप्स्यसि you shall attain to.

Take shelter in Him alone, with all your being, Arjuna. By His mere grace you shall attain supreme peace and the eternal state. (62)

The personal pronoun 'Tam' refers to the same almighty, all-supporting and all-pervading God, who is the director and inner controller of all and has been spoken of in the preceding verse as seated in the heart of all living beings. And he who, having offered his mind, intellect, senses, and vital airs, as well as all his wealth and relations etc., to Him, throws his entire responsibility on Him is said to have taken refuge in him with all his being.

That is to say, having devoutly ascertained the virtues, glory, truth and essential character of God, such a man looks upon Him alone as his supreme goal and safest retreat, chief support and total wealth; and recognizing Him as his lord, protector, supporter, director and greatest wellwisher he depends on Him in everyway and is rid of all fear. Regarding everything as belonging to God and feeling His presence everywhere, he gives up the feeling of mineness and the sense of doership, as well as attachment and desire, in respect of all actions and serves God, seated in the heart of all living beings, according to His behests through the performance of his duties.

Whatever pleasurable or painful experiences he is subjected to, he treats them as a boon sent by God and remains ever satisfied. He never feels the least aggrieved over any dispensation of Providence. Turning his back on honour, fame and prestige he never entertains the feeling of mineness or attachment in respect of anything other than God. With utmost reverence and exclusive attachment he ever continues to hear, reflect on and recite the names, virtues, glory, stories, truth and essential character of God. All these sentiments and practices are covered by taking refuge in God with all one's being.

The devotee who takes refuge in God in the aforesaid manner begins to receive a never-ending flood of grace from the supremely compassionate, benevolent and almighty God, which washes away all his sorrows and bondage. Thus rid of all sorrows and bondage the devotee is filled with supreme joy and realizes the eternal Brahma or God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. This is what is meant by his attaining supreme peace and the eternal supreme abode through the grace of God.

Thus commanding Arjuna to take refuge in God, the inner controller of all, the Lord now winds up His teaching on the subject and says:—

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु॥ ६३॥

इति thus; गुह्याद् गुह्यतरम् more secret than secrecy itself; ज्ञानम् wisdom; मया by Me; ते to you; आख्यातम् has been imparted; एतत् this (esoteric wisdom); अशेषेण fully; विमृश्य pondering carefully; यथा as; इच्छसि you like; तथा accordingly; कुरु do.

Thus has this wisdom, more secret than secrecy itself, been imparted to you by Me. Fully pondering it, do as you like. **(63)**

The partcle 'Iti' in this verse marks the conclusion of the gospel and covers all that has been taught by the Lord from verse 11 of Chapter II up to the preceding verse.

The word 'Jñānam' covers the entire range of the Lord's teachings—whatever He has told Arjuna from verse 11 of Chapter II to the preceding verse with a view to

unfolding in clear terms the secret of His virtues, glory, truth, and essential character. The whole of this teaching is conducive to the direct knowledge of God, hence it has been termed as 'Jñāna' (wisdom). Of all those secrets in the secular as well as in the sacred domain that have been considered as worth keeping from general knowledge, the teaching which gives a correct idea of the virtues, glory and essential character of God has been recognized as the most esoteric. The use of the qualification 'Guhyāt guhyataram' with 'Jñānam' is, therefore, intended to bring out the glory of this teaching as well as to impress on Arjuna's mind the truth that these things should not be revealed before the unqualified.

The personal pronoun 'Mayā' has been used by the Lord to show that none else could expound the truth of His divine virtues, glory and essential character as He Himself would do; hence the wisdom taught by Him above was exceedingly valuable. Even so the use of the pronoun 'Te' is intended to convey that the wisdom referred to above has been imparted by the Lord for the spiritual well-being of Arjuna considering him as qualified to receive it. And the passive participle 'Ākhyātam' indicates that whatever the Lord had got to say on the subject had already been told; and that he had nothing more to say.

Commencing His teaching from verse 11 of Chapter II, the Lord declared the vocation of fighting at more than one places (II.18,37; III.30; VIII.7; XI.34) as the duty of Arjuna according to both Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga, the disciplines of Knowledge and Action, and exhorted him to take refuge in Him. Then, after fully expounding in Chapter XVIII the truth of Sannyāsa (Sāṅkhya) and Tyāga (Yoga) in response to Arjuna's enquiry, He reiterated in verses 56 and 57 the glory of Karmayoga with the element of Bhakti preponderating in it and invited him to approach Him for shelter. Nevertheless, since Arjuna did not express his willingness to do so, the Lord once more showed the unique reward of obeying His commands to that effect and also pointed out the great risk involved in disobeying Him. When Arjuna made no answer even then, the Lord deemed it necessary to caution him; and with that end in view He told him that God was the inspirer of all and dwelt in the heart of all, and accordingly asked him to betake himself to Him, When Arjuna remained silent even on this, the Lord wound up His teaching in the first half of the present verse; and glorifying the teaching already imparted, He admonished Arjuna to ponder the same and in conclusion asked him to do as he liked (यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु). In other words, He exhorted Arjuna to follow any of the several disciplines taught by Him, viz., Karmayoga, Jñānayoga and Bhaktiyoga etc., whichever appealed to him, or to do whatever he thought fit.

When Arjuna made no answer even on being thus asked to decide on his course after pondering the entire range of the Lord's teaching, and when he got despondent as it were, thinking himself to be unqualified and unable to determine his duty, the Lord, who is the inner controller of all and knows the mind of all, took compassion on Arjuna of his own accord, and with the intention of telling him the quintessence of the whole teaching of the Gītā, said:—

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ।। ६४ ।।

सर्वगुह्यतमम् the most esoteric of all; मे My; परमम् supremely secret; वचः word; भूयः again, once more; शृणु hear; मे to Me; दृढम् इष्टः exceedingly dear; असि you are; ततः therefore; इति this; हितम् salutary (advice); ते to you; वक्ष्यामि I shall offer.

Hear, again, My supremely secret word, the most esoteric of all truths. You are extremely dear to Me; therefore, I shall offer you this salutary advice. (64)

All that the Lord has told Arjuna so far is worth preserving as a secret; hence the Lord has spoken of it time and again as 'supremely esoteric' and 'the supreme secret.' Of all those teachings, again, the words in which He has revealed His own virtues, glory, greatness, essential character and divine power, that is to say. Wherever He has declared Himself as no other than the all-pervading, all-supporting, all-powerful God, who is both with and without attributes, and asked Arjuna to practise His adoration and take shelter in Him, are worth keeping from others' knowledge more than anything else. That is why the Lord has used the adjective 'Guhyatamam' (most secret) in the opening verse of Chapter IX and the word 'Rājaguhyam' (the sovereign secret) in the very next; for, fully described His own virtues, glory, essential character, mystery and divinity in that chapter, He has clearly asked Arjuna to practise His worship and place himself under His protection. Even so, while introducing once more the topic of self-surrender to Himself in Chapter X, the Lord has similarly used the adjective 'Paramam' with 'Vacaḥ' in the very opening verse. In the same way, by using the qualifications 'Sarvaguhyatamam' and 'Paramam' with 'Vacaḥ' the present verse, the Lord indicates that He would deliver to Arjuna in the next two verses the most important and esoteric part of His teaching.

The secret that the Lord seeks to confide to Arjuna in the following two verses has been communicated to him even before (IX.34; XII.6,7; XVIII.56-57). Arjuna, however, failed to take special note of it; that is why, sifting that most valuable gospel from the entire body of His teachings He was going to repeat it once more and expected that Arjuna would carefully listen to it and treasure it. That is what is implied by the use of the words 'Bhūyaḥ śṛṇu'.

In the preceding verse the Lord directed Arjuna to use his independent judgment in determining his duty, He did not keep to Himself the responsibility in respect of the same. This filled the mind of Arjuna with dejection. He wondered why the Lord spoke to him in that strain and began to doubt his faith in the Lord, his devotion and attachment to Him. Therefore, with a view to driving away the despondency of Arjuna and in order to cheer him up, the Lord assures him, that he was exceptionally dear to Him, that the tie of love obtaining between them was indissoluble; hence he need not feel downcast. This is what He seeks to impress upon him through the words 'Iṣṭaḥ asi Me dṛḍham'.

The indeclinable 'Tataḥ' implies cause. The Lord thereby shows that, Arjuna being His most intimate friend, He would keep nothing from Arjuna and would confide the most esoteric truth to him in his own interest, and that whatever He would tell Arjuna would prove highly beneficial to him.

The Lord now unfolds the secret of all secrets that He promised in the preceding verse to reveal.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे॥ ६५॥

मन्मना भव give your mind to Me; मद्भक्तः (be) My devotee; मद्याजी (be) My worshipper; माम् to Me; नमस्कुरु bow; माम् to Me; एव alone; एष्यसि you will come; ते to you; सत्यम् truly; प्रतिजाने I promise; मे My; प्रियः beloved; असि you are.

Give your mind to Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and bow to Me. Doing so you will come to Me alone, I truly promise you; for you are exceptionally dear to Me. (65)

Knowing the Lord as all-powerful, all-supporting, all-wise, all-pervading, the ruler and inner controller of all, and a veritable ocean of surpassing beauty, love divinity and other virtues, he who steadily fixes his mind on Him with exclusive love and cannot bear even a moment's separation from Him is said to have given his mind to Him. For a detailed explanation of the term 'Manmanāḥ' the reader is referred to the commentary on the concluding verse of Chapter IX.

A devotee of the Lord recognizes Him as his only supporter, master, guardian, supreme goal and chief support, and places himself wholly under the Lord's control. He does not reserve the least freedom to himself and entirely depends on the Lord. He remains ever contented with every dispensation of the Lord, obeys Him under all circumstances, and loves Him with an undivided heart and with utmost reverence. This is what the Lord expects Arjuna to do when He asks Arjuna to be devoted to Him.

A votary of the Lord offers worship to His image with reverence, devotion and love, by means of leaves and flowers as mentioned in verse 26 of Chapter IX. He invokes the Lord's presence with his heart and worships the Lord mentally. He revers the Lord's utterances, the scene of His sports, and His images in everyway; and realizing the Lord's presence everywhere or treating all living beings as His own manifestations he renders them appropriate service and homage and treats them with due honour and respect. All this is included in His worship. The subject has been discussed more fully in the commentary on verses 26 to 28 and 34 of Chapter IX.

The personal pronoun 'Mām' in this verse stands for the integral Divinity or the Supreme Person, who is all-powerful and adorned with all virtues, who is the inner controller and the chief support of all, who has many aspects such as qualified and unqualified, formless and endowed with form, and so on. It is He who manifested Himself in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and is represented here as delivering His gospel of the Gītā to Arjuna. It is He, again, who manifested Himself as Śrī Rāma in the Tretāyuga and set up the ideal of virtue. And He is the same who manifested Himself in the form of a man-lion in the Satyayuga and rescued Prahlāda.

Prostration before any image, picture, footprints or wooden sandals of the Lord or before the scriptures depicting His virtues, glory and truth, or bowing to all living beings realizing His presence in all or regarding all as His manifestations or living images—this is what is meant by bowing to the Lord. The idea has been elaborated in the concluding verse of Chapter IX.

By adopting the course of discipline indicated in the above paragraphs one is sure

to realize the almighty Lord, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. What is meant by His realization has also been pointed out in the commentary on the concluding verse of Chapter IX.

Arjuna was a beloved devotee and friend of the Lord. Therefore, out of love and kindly feelings towards him the Lord was anxious that Arjuna, and through him all qualified souls, should repose unwavering faith in the Lord. It is with this idea that He uses the words "Te satyam pratijāne (I truly promise you)." That is to say, reposing firm faith in the assurance of the Lord that one who pursues the course of discipline suggested above surely realizes Him, a man should strive his level best to attain the qualifications mentioned in the verse.

The words "Me priyaḥ asi" are intended to justify the assurance given by the loving Lord in the words "Te satyam pratijāne." What He means to say is that it was His love for Arjuna that compelled Him to give the above assurance in order to strengthen his faith; otherwise there was no need for Him to do so.*

---

* Who can glorify the high-souled Arjuna, for whose sake God Himself delivered with His own lips the divine message of the Gītā. In the *Udyoga-Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* we read as follows:—

एष नारायणः कृष्णः फाल्गुनश्च नरः स्मृतः। नारायणो नरश्चैव सत्त्वमेकं द्विधा कृतम्॥

(49. 20)

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the divine sage Nārāyaṇa Himself and Arjuna has been declared as Nara (the twin-born brother of Nārāyaṇa). Nārāyaṇa and Nara are one life manifested in two forms."

Our object here is to show how great was the love the Lord bore towards Arjuna. This itself will indicate how dearly he was loved by Arjuna.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a close companion of Arjuna and often remained by his side even during his excursions into the forest and his sports in water, at the royal court as well as during sacrificial performances etc. They were on such intimate terms with each other that even in their domestic life one came across scenes of free interchange of pure and unadulterated love between them. Returning from the camp of the Pāṇḍavas, Sañjaya, King Dhṛtarāṣṭra's minister, gave the following account to his master:—

"I have seen unique love between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. In order to have a talk with them I called at their inner apartment in a most humble spirit ! I saw there the two noble souls seated on a most precious seat, clad in rich constumes and adorned with costly jewels. In the lap of Arjuna rested the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, while Arjuna's own feet rested in the lap of Draupadī (the common consort of the Pāṇḍavas) and Satyabhāmā (Śrī Kṛṣṇa's consort). Finding me there Arjuna pushed the gold stool from beneath his feet towards me and beckoned to me take my seat on it. I touched it with reverence and squatted on the floor."

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa called on the Pāṇḍavas in the forest and in course of His conversation He spoke to Arjuna thus:—

ममैव त्वं तवैवाहं ये मदीयास्तवैव ते। यस्त्वां द्वेष्टि स मां द्वेष्टि यस्त्वामनु स मामनु॥

(Mahā., Vana., XII.45)

"Arjuna, you are Mine and I am yours. Those who are Mine are wholly and solely yours. In other words, whatever is Mine belongs to you. He who is on inimical terms with you is My enemy; and whoever is devoted to you is devoted to me."

When Bhīṣma had mowed down the Pāṇḍava army for nine days, Yudhiṣṭhira approached the Lord at night and said to Him in great perturbation, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa, our encounter with Bhīṣma is just like the rushing of moths into the burning flame for being devoured by it. Now tell me what to do." To this Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa comfortingly said, "Be not worried. Tell Me and I will dispose of Bhīṣma. Rest assured that Arjuna will kill him." Then, revealing the tie of love which bound Him to Arjuna, the Lord said:—

Not only does the man who practises in a full measure all the four items mentioned above attain God; but the practice of even one of these can lead to God-realization. For the Lord Himself declares in verse 14 of Chapter VIII that He is easy of realization through mere exclusive thought; verse 23 of Chapter VII and verse 25 of Chapter IX state that he who is solely devoted to the Lord eventually attains Him; while verses 26 to 28 of Chapter IX and verse 46 of the present chapter declare Him as attainable through mere worship. Of course, it is true that the specific practice of anyone of the aforesaid times incidentally involves the practice of other limbs too; and the feeling of reverence and devotion is involved in the practice of all these limbs.

तव भ्राता मम सखा सम्बन्धी शिष्य एव च। मांसान्युत्कृत्य दास्यामि फाल्गुनार्थे महीपते॥
एष चापि नरव्याघ्रो मत्कृते जीवितं त्यजेत्। एष नः समयस्तात तारयेम परस्परम्॥

(*Mahā., Bhīṣma.,* 107.33-34)

"O King ! your brother, Arjuna, is My friend, relation and disciple too. I can cut My own flesh and part with it for the sake of Arjuna. And this tiger among men can as well lay down his life for My sake. We have pledged our word, dear cousin, that we shall stand by each other till the end."

This can furnish some clue to the tie of uncommon love that bound Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna.

Karṇa was in possession of an infallible weapon (a kind of lancet) which he had received from, Indra, the lord of paradise. The latter had told him that the warrior at whom he hurled it would surely die. But he could use the missile only once. Karṇa had kept the lancet in reserve for being used against Arjuna. Duryodhana and others repeatedly urged him to use the missile against Arjuna and kill him outright. Karṇa himself would feel inclined to do so. But as soon as he came face to face with Arjuna, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who occupied the charioteer's box in the latter's car, cast such a spell on Karṇa that he forgot to discharge the missile. When Ghaṭotkaca, Bhīma's son from a demon wife, played havoc among the Kaurava army by his demoniac stratagems, Duryodhana and others were all unnerved. They all exclaimed with one voice, "First dispose of this wretch by hurling Indra's missile, so that we may be spared. At this dead of night if this demon finishes us all, of what avail would that missile be to us, which you have specially reserved for Arjuna ?" Therefore, Karṇa felt constrained to hurl the missile at Ghaṭotkaca, who died instantaneously. His death cast a gloom over the entire Pāṇḍva family. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, however, was immensely pleased. As if maddened with joy He clasped Arjuna to His bosom again again. Later on He took Sātyaki into His confidence and said, "Sātyaki, on the battlefield it was I who kept Karṇa spell-bound. That is why he could not discharge the missile against Arjuna so far. So long as the missile, which was capable of despatching Arjuna, remained with Karṇa, I was in perpetual anxiety. Anxiety played so much on My nerves that I could not get a wink of sleep at night, nor did I ever have a gleam of joy. Seeing that infallible weapon used up today, I deem Arjuna to have escaped the jaws of death. Look here, My beloved parents, friends and kinsmen like you and My own life are not dearer to Me than Arjuna. In the field of battle protection of Arjuna's life is more essential in My eyes than that of any other life. I would not barter away Arjuna even for anything which is more valuable than the kingdom of the three worlds. Today I cannot contain Myself for joy to see Arjuna reborn as it were."

त्रैलोक्यराज्याद् यत्किञ्चिद् भवेदन्यत्सुदुर्लभम्। नेच्छेयं सात्वताहं तद्विना पार्थं धनञ्जयम्॥
अतः प्रहर्षः सुमहान् युयुधानाद्य मेऽभवत्। मृतं प्रत्यागतमिव दृष्ट्वा पार्थं धनञ्जयम्॥

(*Mahā., Droṇa.,* 182.44-45)

The friendship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna was so well-known that Duryodhana himself once said:—

आत्मा हि कृष्णः पार्थस्य कृष्णस्यात्मा धनञ्जयः। यद् ब्रूयादर्जुनः कृष्णं सर्वं कुर्यादसंशयम्॥
कृष्णो धनञ्जयस्यार्थे स्वर्गलोकमपि त्यजेत्। तथैव पार्थः कृष्णार्थे प्राणानपि परित्यजेत्॥

(*Mahā., Sabhā.,* 52.31-33)

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ ६६ ॥

सर्वधर्मान् all duties; **परित्यज्य** resigning (to Me); **एकम्** only; **माम्** Me (the all-powerful and all-supporting Lord); **शरणं व्रज** take refuge in; **अहम्** I; **त्वा** you; **सर्वपापेभ्यः** of all sins; **मोक्षयिष्यामि** shall absolve; **मा शुचः** worry not.

Resigning all your duties to Me, the all-powerful and all-supporting Lord, take refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins, worry not. **(66)**

The compound word 'Sarvadharmān' in this verse denotes all those duties enjoined by the Śāstras, which have been prescribed for a particular man according to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, and which have been referred to in verse 6 of Chapter XII as 'Sarvāṇi Karmāṇī' and by the term 'Sarvakarmāṇi' in verse 57 of the present chapter. Laying down all these duties in God in the manner suggested in the commentary on the verses mentioned above is what is meant by the verb 'Parityajya'. For, while discussing the conception of 'Tyāga' in the course of this chapter, the Lord has unequivocally declared in verse 7 that it is not justifiable to abandon one's allotted duties, so that giving them up through ignorance is what has been characterized as Tāmasika Tyāga. Therefore, by no stretch of imagination can the word 'Parityajya' be interpreted in the sense of abandoning all duties.

Besides this, the Lord has commanded Arjuna at more than one places (III.30; VIII.7; XI.34) not to desist from fighting, which is a sacred duty with the Kṣatriyas, but to participate in war resigning all duties to him. And having carefully listened to the Gītā, Arjuna himself not only expresses his willingness to do His bidding in verse 73

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the soul of Arjuna and Arjuna, the soul of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa would do all that Arjuna might ask Him to do; there is no doubt about it. Śrī Kṛṣṇa can forgo even the celestial world for the sake of Arjuna; even so Arjuna can give up his very life for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sake."

There are many more episodes illustrative of the ideal love between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. For them the reader is referred to the relevant portions of the *Mahābhārata and Śrīmad Bhāgavata.*

It was due to this exceptional love of Arjuna that the Lord had to unfold to him the most hidden secret of His integral being known by the name of Puruṣottama or the Supreme Person, which is even more secret than the all comparatively esoteric wisdom. And it was for this love that, even in the Supreme Abode of the Lord, Arjuna obtained the most rare privilege of personal service to the Lord, which is coveted by the greatest Vedantists and exponents of the Vedas. After his ascent to heaven the pious king Yudhiṣṭhira, who had attained a super-celestial body, saw in the Supreme Abode of the Lord:—

ददर्श तत्र गोविन्दं ब्राह्मेण वपुषान्वितम्। दीप्यमानं स्ववपुषा दिव्यैरस्त्रैरुपस्थितम्॥
चक्रप्रभृतिभिर्घोरैर्दिव्यैः पुरुषविग्रहैः । उपास्यमानं वीरेण फाल्गुनेन स्ववर्चसा॥

(Mahā., Swarga., IV.2-4)

"Bhagavān Śrī Govinda is endowed there with His own Brahmic or purely spiritual Body, which is all refulgence. His divine weapons as the Discuss, and other formidable missiles are waiting upon Him in their super-celestial human semblances ! The most glorious and heroic Arjuna is also attending upon Him." Such is the 'supreme reward' of carefully hearing, grasping and assimilating the philosophy of the Gītā. And it is quite in the fitness of things that a man like Arjuna, who was not only self-controlled, most selfless, talented and wise but also the supremely beloved friend, servant and disciple of the Lord, should obtain the 'supreme reward.'

of the present chapter, but actually participated in the Mahābhārata war and thus discharged his sacred obligation. 'Sarvadharmān parityajya' should, therefore, be taken to mean laying down all one's duties in the Lord, and not actually giving them up. And the man who has laid down his duties in the Lord regards everything as belonging to Him; and completely renouncing the feeling of 'I' and 'mine', as well as attachment and desire in respect of his mind, senses and body and with regard to all actions performed by them as well as to their fruit, continues to perform such duties only for His sake and according to His behests and prompting like a mere tool in His hands.

Having resigned all his duties to God in the above manner, the devotee who has solely taken refuge in the Lord regards Him as his supreme goal, safest retreat, chief support, dearest object of love, greatest wellwisher, most intimate friend and nearest relative, and looks upon Him as his supporter, lord and guardian. He constantly thinks of Him at all times with supreme reverence and exclusive love even while sitting or standing, awake or asleep, eating and drinking, walking and moving from one place to another and carrying out His behests in every way. He ever remains contented with His dispensation and like the celebrated devotee, Prahlāda, entirely depends on Him and Him alone. All this is covered by taking refuge in the Lord. The idea has been clearly brought out in the commentary on verse 6 of Chapter XII, the concluding verse of Chapter IX and verse 57 of this very chapter.

The word 'Pāpa' forming part of the compound word 'Sarvapāpebhyaḥ' in this verse stands for the bondage of action in the shape of fruits of good and evil deeds, under which this Jīva or embodied soul has been revolving from birth to birth through different species of life; and the absolution from sins referred to here consists in freeing one from the above bondage. Therefore, the idea underlying the freedom from sins promised by the Lord is the same as has been conveyed in verse 31 of Chapter III by the words 'Karmabhiḥ mucyante' by the words 'Mṛtyusaṁsārasāgarāt samuddhartā bhavāmi, in verse 7 of Chapter XII, and by the words 'Matprasādāt sarvadurgāṇī tariṣyasi' in verse 58 of the present chapter.

The Lord winds up the teaching of the Gītā by comforting Arjuna in the words "Mā Śucaḥ" (worry not). Concluding with these words the teaching which He commenced in verse 11 of Chapter II with the words 'Aśocyān' (not worth grieving for), the Lord exhorts Arjuna, who had already betaken himself to Him, to surrender himself completely and thereby be rid of all worries, and having shed all grief and fear, abandon himself to His care for ever. This total absence of sorrow and realization of God form the principal theme of the Gītā.

Having thus concluded the teaching of the Gītā, the Lord now seeks to glorify the teaching and the study etc. of this gospel and with this end in view He first points out the marks of him who is unqualified for the same and forbids Arjuna to impart the teaching to such a man.

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन।
न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति॥ ६७॥

ते by you; इदम् this (secret gospel of the Gītā); कदाचन never; न neither; अतपस्काय to

a man who lacks penance; न nor; अभक्ताय to him wo is not devoted; न च nor again; अशुश्रूषवे to him who is unwilling to hear; वाच्यम् should be imparted; च and; यः who (to him); माम् Me; अभ्यसूयति finds fault with; न never (should it be imparted).

This secret gospel of the Gītā should never be imparted to a man who lacks penance, nor to him who is wanting in devotion, nor even to him who lends not a willing ear; and in no case to him who finds fault with Me. (67)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Idam' in this verse covers the entire range of the Lord's teachings imparted to Arjuna from verse 11 of Chapter II to the preceding verse with a view to expounding the truth of His own virtues, glory, mystery and essential character. In order to determine the eligibility for receiving this gospel the Lord forbids Arjuna to repeat it to those who labour under the four disqualifications mentioned in this verse. Out of the four types of unqualified persons referred to above the Lord mentions first of all him who lacks austerity. By shutting out this man from the portals of the Gītā the Lord seeks to impress upon Arjuna that the gospel of the Gītā is an extremely profound secret, that Arjuna was His most loving devotee and endowed with divine virtues, hence He had confided it to him in his own interest, recognizing him as qualified to receive it. Therefore He warns Arjuna not to repeat the Gītā, replete as it is with an exposition of His virtues, glory and reality, to a man who is not given to austerity in the form of discharging his own sacred obligations, who having abandoned his duty has given himself over to sinful ways out of greed for worldly pleasures due to attachment for sensuous enjoyments. For such a man would be incapable of assimilating this teaching and would thereby bring dishonour to the same as well as to the Lord Himself.

The compound word 'Abhaktāya' stands for the unbeliever who has no faith in God, much less love or reverence for Him, and who regards himself as everything. The most esoteric gospel of the Gītā should not be delivered to such a man either; for being incapable of grasping its secret he would be unable to assimilate it.

Even if a man practises austerity in the shape of performing his sacred duties, but having no reverence and love for the teaching of the Gītā does not care to lend his ear to it, this most esoteric gospel should not be delivered to him. For a man of this type would get disgusted with it, and would not be able to appreciate it. Thereby he would only belittle the teaching as well as the Lord.

In no case should this teaching be repeated to a man who cavils at the Lord,—who has assumed a form with attributes for redeeming the world,—who paints His virtues as a vice and vilifies Him. For, being jealous of the Lord's virtues, glory and divinity, he would treat the Lord with even greater contempt and thereby aggravate his sin.

He who is free from all the four disqualifications mentioned in this verse is unquestionably fully qualified to receive this gospel. Next to him, he who lacks penance in the form of devotion to his duty, but is free from the other three disqualifications is also eligible for it. And he too who is neither given to austerity nor fully devoted to the Lord, but who is willing to hear the Gītā, is qualified to a certain extent. He, however, who looks on the Lord with a carping eye or vilifies Him is absolutely unqualified.

Having thus pointed out the marks of him who is unqualified to receive the gospel of the Gītā, the Lord now tells Arjuna in the following two verses the reward and value of propagating it among His devotees.

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः॥ ६८॥

यः (he) who; मयि to Me; पराम् supreme; भक्तिम् love; कृत्वा having offered; परमम् गुह्यम् most secret; इमम् this (gospel of the Gītā); मद्भक्तेषु among My devotees; अभिधास्यति will preach; असंशयः without doubt; माम् Me; एव alone; एष्यति shall come to.

He who, offering the highest love to Me, preaches the most profound gospel of the Gītā among My devotees, shall come to Me alone; there is no doubt about it. (68)

The demonstrative adjective 'Imam' in this verse refers to the entire gospel of the Gītā. The use of the adjectives 'Paramam' and 'Guhyam' with reference to it is intended to show that this teaching, inasmuch as it secures freedom from the bondage of worldly existence and leads one to realize God Himself, is superb and esoteric.

Endowed with faith in God, His devotees recognize Him as responsible for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the whole universe, all-powerful and the universal Lord, and love Him accordingly. They are eager to hear of His virtues, glory, pastimes and reality, and are delighted to hear the same. Such devotees are referred to here by the term 'Madbhakteṣu'. The use of this compound word is intended to determine the eligibility for receiving the gospel of the Gītā. The idea is that the devotee of God is automatically freed from all the four disqualifications referred to in the preceding verse. Therefore, a devotee of the Lord is the only fit recipient of this gospel and every person, to whatever grade in society and to whatever caste he may belong, can be a devotee of God (IX.32). Hence the caste, creed and nationality etc., of a man are no bar to his eligibility. Possessed of extreme reverence for the Lord Himself or His utterances, a devotee of God is overwhelmed with love by the thought of His name, virtues, sports, glory and essential character and preaches the gospel of the Gītā among His devotees in a disinterested spirit for the sake of His pleasure alone. That is to say, he gives them lessons on the original text of the Gītā, explains the meaning of its verses, helps them recite the text with correct intonation, brings out and elucidates the ideas contained in it, resolves the doubts of his audience and inculcates the truth of the Gītā upon their mind and awakens in them a strong impulse to translate into practice the teaching of the Gītā. All this is covered by preaching the gospel of the Gītā among His devotees with supreme devotion of Him.

A devotee of God, who propagates the ideas of the Lord among those who are qualified to receive them, in a disinterested spirit and with the sole object of attaining devotion to Him, doubtless reaches Him. That is to say, the above is an unfailing means to His realization; hence those qualified devotees who seek to attain Him must undertake the mission of preaching and popularizing the gospel of the Gītā.

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः।
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि॥ ६९॥

तस्मात् than he; मे प्रियकृत्तमः doing a more loving service to Me; मनुष्येषु among human beings; कश्चित् anyone; न च there is not; च and; भुवि on the (entire) globe; तस्मात् than he; मे प्रियतरः dearer to Me; अन्यः (anyone) else; न neither; भविता shall be.

Among men there is none who does Me a more loving service than he; nor shall anyone be dearer to Me on the entire globe than he. (69)

The personal pronoun 'Tasmāt' in this verse refers to the pious and loving devotee of God, who has deep knowledge of the Gītā and preaches its gospel among His devotees as mentioned in the foregoing verses. Dissemination of His ideas among His devotees is dearer to the Lord than all other duties that endear one to Him, such as the performance of sacrifices and penance and practice of charity, service, worship, Japa (the repetition of sacred formulas) and meditation etc.; nothing in this world is so dear to the Lord as the mission referred to above. Therefore, he who disseminates His ideas among His devotees with reverence and devotion is dearer to Him than everyone else; none is dearer than he. Completely neglecting his own interests, he does only that which is dear to the Lord, hence he is exceptionally dear to Him. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

The proclamation of the Lord that no one is dearer to Him than the devotee mentioned above, does not refer to the present alone, it is equally true of the future as well. That is to say, it is hardly possible that anyone would be dearer to Him even at a future date. For when no other service is dearer to the Lord than the one in which he is engaged, how could anyone be more beloved of Him through any other practice ? Therefore, of all the practices helpful to His realization, the mission of devoutly propagating His ideas among His devotees is the best. It is with this belief that the Lord expects His devotees to proceed with this noble work. This is what He seeks to convey in the latter half of the verse.

In this way in the preceding two verses the Lord pointed out the reward and value of propagating among His devotees the gospel of the Gītā in a reverent and devout spirit. Everyone, however, is not equal to the task; scarce anyone is qualified for it. Hence He now proceeds to glorify the study of the Gītā.

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः।
ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः॥ ७०॥

यः whosoever; इमम् this; धर्म्यम् sacred; आवयोः संवादम् our dialogue (in the form of the Gītā); अध्येष्यते will study; तेन by him; च as well; अहम् I; ज्ञानयज्ञेन through, wisdom-sacrifice; इष्टः स्याम् shall be worshipped; इति such (is); मे My; मतिः mind.

Whosoever studies this sacred dialogue of ours in the form of the Gītā, by him too shall I be worshipped through wisdom-sacrifice; such is My mind. (70)

The demonstrative adjective 'Imam' along with the words 'Āvayoḥ saṁvādam' here refers to the text of the Gītā in the form of a dialogue between Arjuna and Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which has been characterized in verse 68 above as 'Paramam guhyam' (the most esoteric gospel). The use of the adjective 'Dharmyam' with reference to it is intended to convey that the gospel in question has been delivered by the divine Lord Himself; hence whatever has been taught therein is replete with virtue from beginning to end. It contains nothing which offends against righteousness or which is superfluous. Therefore, it is the paramount duty of man to follow the teachings embodied in it.

Receiving lessons on the holy Gītā from the devotees of God who are conversant with its inner meaning, reciting it daily, going through its translation in one's own language, pondering over its meaning and striving to grasp the same with the help of those who are in the know of it,—practice of all these is included in the study of this scripture.

Going through the translation of the Gītā side by side with reciting the text, and daily recitation of the Gītā with an eye to its meaning is much better than going through the text or daily reciting it without following its meaning; and it is still better to be overwhelmed with love and get imbued with its spirit while going through or reciting the text in an intelligent way.

The latter half of this verse is intended to reveal the value of studying the Gītā in the aforesaid manner. The idea is that a study of this scripture enables one to acquaint oneself correctly and fully with the truth about the absolute and relative, as well as the manifest and unmanifest, aspects of the Divinity. Therefore, whoever studies the Gītā with the object of grasping the truth about the Lord will be deemed to worship Him through wisdom-sacrifice. The practice in the form of this wisdom-sacrifice has been recognized as far superior to other practices carried on with the help of material substances (IV.33); for all practices culminate in the knowledge of the truth about God. And this consummation is easily reached through the wisdom-sacrifice referred to above, hence a seeker of beatitude should whole-heartedly devote himself to study of the Gītā.

Having thus pointed out the value of a study of the holy Gītā, the Lord now declares the reward of hearing it in the case of those who are unable to study it in the above manner.

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।
सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥ ७१ ॥

यः नरः the man who; श्रद्धावान् possessed of reverence; च and; अनसूयः free from cavilling; शृणुयात् should hear (the holy Gītā); अपि even; सः he; अपि too; मुक्तः absolved of (sins); पुण्यकर्मणाम् of the virtuous; शुभान् लोकान् the happy worlds; प्राप्नुयात् shall attain to.

The man who hears the holy Gītā with reverence and in an uncarping spirit,—liberated from sin, he too shall reach the happy worlds of the virtuous. (71)

The use of the word 'Naraḥ' is intended to show that he who lacks the inclination even to hear with reverence the holy Gītā hardly deserves to be called a human being; for his human birth is proving fruitless. Therefore, he is only a beast in human form.

Believing in the existence of God as well as in His virtues and glory, and with a firm conviction that the holy Gītā is the word of God Himself, and that whatever has been said therein is absolute truth, and reposing faith in the exponent of the Gītā, the man who hears the original text or its exposition with love and eagerness is referred to here by the word 'Śraddhāvān'. And 'Anasūyaḥ' is he who does not find fault with the Lord or His utterance nor shows disrespect in any form to the holy Gītā while hearing it.

To say nothing of him who preaches the gospel of the Gītā among others as mentioned in verse 68, or of him who studies it himself as referred to in verse 70 above, even he who is merely able to hear it with faith is absolved of sin. Therefore, he who is unable to preach or even study it himself should make it a point at least to hear it.

The man who is thus given to hearing the Gītā is rid of all sins committed in successive previous lives,—which bring about one's birth among low-born creatures such as beasts and birds etc., and throw one into the infernal regions,—and obtains a residence in the higher worlds from Indra's heaven onward to the supreme abode of God according to the degree of his faith and devotion. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

Having thus glorified the preaching, recitation and hearing of the holy Gītā, the Lord now enquires of Arjuna his reactions to the above, just in order to awaken him to his real situation, although He knew everything Himself.

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा।
कच्चिदज्ञानसम्मोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनञ्जय॥ ७२॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; कच्चित् whether; एतत् this (gospel of the Gītā); त्वया by you; एकाग्रेण चेतसा with one-pointed mind; श्रुतम् has been heard; धनञ्जय O conquerer of riches, Arjuna; कच्चित् whether; ते your; अज्ञानसम्मोहः delusion born of ignorance; प्रनष्टः has disappeared.

Have you heard this gospel of the Gītā with one-pointed mind, Arjuna ? And has your delusion born of ignorance melted away, O conquerer of riches ? (72)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Etat' in this verse covers the entire range of the most esoteric divine teaching imparted by the Lord from verse 11 of Chapter II to verse 66 of the present chapter. It is in order to impress upon Arjuna the importance of this teaching that the Lord asks him the question embodied in the first half of this verse. The idea is that the above teaching of the Lord is something very rare; He could not acknowledge His divinity to everybody or ask anyone and everyone to seek refuge in Him. He, therefore, was naturally anxious to know whether Arjuna had carefully and attentively heard His teachings; for should he have missed it, he had certainly committed an egregious blunder.

Now, if Arjuna had carefully heard the teaching, it must have borne its fruit. He, therefore, reminded Arjuna how he had complained of his being puzzled about his duty (II.7), how he had reckoned it a sin to discharge his sacred obligation (I.36), how he had preferred to live on alms abandoning all his duties (II.5), how he had felt perturbed at the thought of killing his

own kinsmen (I.45-47) and how he had been at a loss to determine the course of his action (II.6-7),—which had all been due to his mind being warped by infatuation,—and was accordingly anxious to know whether that infatuation had left him. Should he have given an attentive ear to His teaching, his mind must have been cleared of the cloud of infatuation. And in case it had not been dispelled, that clearly showed absence of attentiveness on his part.

The above two questions of the Lord are impregnated with the lesson that a man should devote himself to the study and hearing of the holy Gītā with a careful and attentive mind; and till he is completely disabused of the delusion born of his ignorance he should think that he has not correctly grasped the teaching of the Lord, so that it is essential to ponder it with reverence.

Thus enquired by the Lord, Arjuna conveys his reactions to Him, expressing his gratitude.

अर्जुन उवाच

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव॥ ७३॥

अच्युत O infallible Lord; **त्वत्प्रसादात्** by Your grace; **मोहः** (my) delusion; **नष्टः** is dispelled; **मया** by me; **स्मृतिः** wisdom; **लब्धा** gained; **गतसन्देहः** freed from doubt; **स्थितः अस्मि** I stand; **तव** Your; **वचनम्** bidding; **करिष्ये** will do.

Arjuna said: Kṛṣṇa, by Your grace my delusion has fled and wisdom has been gained by me. I stand shorn of all doubts. I will do your bidding. (73)

Arjuna has now come to realize that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the immutable Absolute, the supreme Spirit and the almighty and immortal God. This is what he seeks to convey by addressing Him as 'Acyuta' (infallible Lord).

Arjuna gratefully answers the question of the Lord, contained in the preceding verse, in the words 'Naṣṭaḥ Mohaḥ'. Arjuna thereby acknowledges his immense obligation to the Lord for the divine gospel so kindly delivered by Him, and assures the Lord that his delusion,—which was due to his want of correct knowledge about the Lord's virtues, glory, divinity and essential character, and which prevented him from carrying out the Lord's behests (II.9) and flustered him at the thought of the impending destruction of his kinsmen (I.28-47),—had completely left him.

With the disappearance of delusion, born of his ignorance, the light of divine wisdom had dawned in his mind, the memory of the virtues, glory, divinity and essential character of the Lord had been fully awakened, and His integral being had been revealed to him, leaving nothing unknown to him. This is what Arjuna seeks to impress on the Lord by the words 'Smṛtiḥ Labdhā'.

Arjuna had now no doubt left in his mind about the virtues, glory and divinity of the Lord, and His absolute and relative as well as the manifest and unmanifest aspects, and even so about the nature of virtue and sin, and about what he should do and what he should abstain from, etc. In other words, all his doubts had been resolved, and in consequence of it the unsteadiness of his mind had completely

vanished. This is what Arjuna means by the words "Sthitaḥ asmi gatasandehaḥ".

Lastly, Arjuna felt that by the Lord's grace he had attained the object of his life, and thus had no duty left for him. Therefore, he was prepared to do as the Lord bade him and would perform all his duties such as fighting etc., in the interest of the world order according to His directions by way of sport as a mere instrument. This is the idea conveyed by the words "Kariṣye vacanam tava".

Having thus repeated the holy Gītā in the form of a dialogue between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in response to the enquiry from Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Sañjaya now reveals to his master the glory of the Gītā in the following two verses while concluding his message.

सञ्जय उवाच

इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः।
संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम्॥ ७४॥

इति thus; अहम् I; वासुदेवस्य of Vāsudeva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; च and; महात्मनः पार्थस्य of the high-souled Arjuna, son of Pṛthā (Kuntī); इमम् this; अद्भुतम् mysterious; रोमहर्षणम् (and) thrilling (lit., making the hair stand on their ends); संवादम् conversation; अश्रौषम् heard.

Sañjaya said: Thus I heard the mysterious and thrilling conversation between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the high-souled Arjuna, son of Kuntī. (74)

The particle 'Iti' marks the conclusion of the gospel of the Gītā.

The use of the epithet 'Vāsudeva' (lit., the all-pervading Spirit) for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and of the qualification 'Mahātmā' (high-souled or noble-minded) with reference to Arjuna is intended to glorify the Gītā. The idea is that this gospel has been preached by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is no other than the all-pervading Divinity, the indweller of all hearts, in response to the enquiry from Arjuna, who is an incarnation of the divine sage Nara; hence it is highly valuable. No other sacred teaching can bear comparison with it; for it is the quintessence of all scriptures or sacred books.*

The dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna has been spoken of as mysterious because it enables one to realize the integral Divinity, possessed of wonderful and transcendent virtues, glory and supernatural powers. And even as a man hears and understands it he is filled with delight and wonder, which make his hair stand on their end. Hence it has been called 'Romaharṣaṇam'. Sañjaya feels proud that he has been able to hear with his own ears such a wonderful dialogue.

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद्गुह्यमहं परम्।
योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम्॥ ७५॥

---

* गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किमन्यैः शास्त्रविस्तरैः। या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य मुखपद्माद्विनिःसृता॥

(Mahā., Bhīṣma, 43.1)

"The Gītā alone should be heard and chanted, studied and taught, as well as pondered and assimilated; collections of other scriptures are of no avail. For the Gītā has flowed from the lotus-like lips of no other than Bhagavān Viṣṇu, who bears a lotus on His navel."

व्यासप्रसादात् (having been blessed with the divine vision) by the grace of Śrī Vyāsa; अहम् I; एतत् this; परमं गुह्यम् supremely esoteric; योगम् Yoga or wisdom; कथयतः imparting (it to Arjuna); योगेश्वरात् स्वयम् कृष्णात् from Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yoga, Himself; साक्षात् before my very eyes; श्रुतवान् have heard.

Having been blessed with the divine vision by the grace of Śrī Vyāsa, I heard this supremely esoteric gospel from the Lord of Yoga, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, imparting it to Arjuna before my very eyes. (75)

The use of the compound word 'Vyāsaprasādāt' is intended to express Sañjaya's gratitude towards Maharṣi Vyāsa, who had so kindly gifted him with the divine vision, *i.e.,* with the supernatural faculties of seeing what is out of sight, hearing what is out of hearing and grasping what is out of one's mental grasp. It was due to that supernatural gift that Sañjaya was enabled to hear the divine gospel of the Gītā, which he was otherwise incapable of hearing.

The demonstrative pronoun 'Etat' stands here for the holy Gītā in the form of the above dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. The use of the adjective 'Paramam' with reference to it is intended to bring out its superb character; and 'Guhyam' points to its esoteric nature, *i.e.*, bangs its doors against the unqualified. The third adjective 'Yogam' indicates that the gospel contains a detailed exposition of Karmayoga, Jñānayoga, Dhyānayoga, Bhaktiyoga and other practices leading to God-realization; and the gospel itself, *i.e.,* even its devout recitation is an independent means of realizing God and hence deserves the title of 'Yoga'.

Lastly, Sañjaya tells Dhṛtarāṣṭra that the Gītā, which he had just repeated to the King, had not been received by him through a third agency but directly from the lotus-like lips of the almighty Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the controller of all Yogic powers.

Having thus revealed the value of hearing the most rare gospel of the Gītā, Sañjaya, while expressing his own reactions, glorifies the recollection of that gospel.

राजन्संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम्।
केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ ७६ ॥

राजन् O king; केशवार्जुनयोः between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna; इमम् this; अद्भुतम् marvellous; च and; पुण्यम् sacred; संवादम् conversation; संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य recollecting again and again; मुहुर्मुहुः again and yet again; हृष्यामि I rejoice.

Remembering, over and over, that sacred and mystic conversation between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, O King ! I rejoice again and yet again. (76)

The holy Gītā in the form of this mystic conversation between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna purifies him who studies, teaches, hears, ponders and discourses on it, and does good to his soul in every way. Hence it has been characterized as 'Puṇyam' (sacred). And it reveals the marvellous virtues, glory, divinity, truth, mystery and essential character of the Lord; hence it has been spoken of as 'Adbhutam'.

By giving his own reactions in this verse Sañjaya glorifies the recollection of the gospel of the Gītā. Sañjaya means to say that the gospel preached by the Lord

had captivated his heart so much that he had lost his relish for anything else. He was reminded of that teaching again and again, and merged in the thought of it. He was being transported with joy and overwhelmed with love.

Having thus glorified the recollection of the Gītā, Sañjaya while giving his further reactions extols the recollection of the Cosmic Body of the Lord.

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः।
विस्मयो मे महान्राजन्हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः॥ ७७॥

राजन् O king; हरेः of Śrī Hari; तत् that; अत्यद्भुतम् most wonderful; रूपम् form; च also; संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य remembering again and again; महान् great; मे विस्मयः (is) my wonder; च and; पुनः पुनः again and yet again; हृष्यामि I rejoice.

Remembering also, again and again, that most wonderful Form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, great is my wonder and I rejoice over and over again. (77)

By hearing, pondering and singing the virtues, glory, exploits, divinity, greatness and the sacred names of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and by perceiving and touching His Form a man is rid of all sins. Association of any kind with Him frees one from all sins, ignorance and sorrows and the Lord robs the devotee of his heart; hence He is termed as 'Hari'.

The word 'Rūpam' qualified by the adjectives 'Tat' and 'Atyadbhutam' refers to the most wonderful and divine Cosmic Body of the Lord, which He had revealed before Arjuna and the glory of whose vision has been declared by the Lord Himself in verses 47 and 48 of Chapter XI.

The memory of that Cosmic Body of the Lord did not fade from the mind of Sañjaya, he was reminded of it again and again and wondered how he was vouchsafed a vision of that most rare and divine Form of the Lord. He had no merit to his credit, which could earn him that unique privilege. The motiveless mercy of the Lord alone had entitled him to that privilege. A mental survey of the wonderful phenomena and events forming part of that vision filled him with wonder and awe at the marvellous Yogic power of the Lord.

Thus giving his own reactions and glorifying the gospel of the Gītā and the recollection of the marvellous Form of the Lord, Sañjaya now concludes this chapter indicating the certain prospect of the Pāndava's victory.

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम॥ ७८॥

यत्र where; योगेश्वरः the Lord of Yoga; कृष्णः Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa; यत्र (and) where; धनुर्धरः the wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow; पार्थः the son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; तत्र there; श्रीः goodness; विजयः victory; भूतिः glory; ध्रुवा नीतिः (and) unfailing righteousness; मम मतिः (such is) my conviction.

Wherever there is Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yoga, and wherever there

is Arjuna, the wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow, goodness, victory, glory and unfailing righteousness are there: such is my conviction. (78)

By using the epithet 'Yogeśvaraḥ' for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and 'Dhanurdharaḥ' for Arjuna, Sañjaya impresses upon King Dhṛtarāṣṭra the glory of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, and indicates the sure prospect of the Pāṇḍava's victory in order to awaken in the king's mind an inclination to negotiate peace. In other words, Sañjaya wanted to make it clear that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the Lord of all Yogic powers and that He was capable of creating, maintaining and destroying the whole universe in a trice by dint of His Yogic power. There could be no doubt about the victory of King Yudhiṣṭhira, who had Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the manifest Divinity, as his supporter.

Besides this, Arjuna too was an incarnation of the divine sage Nara, a beloved friend of the Lord, and a great hero, the wielder of the famous Gāṇḍīva bow; he too had girded his loins to see his brother victorious. Hence there was none who could vie with Yudhiṣṭhira at that moment. For where the sun is, light must be there; even so the very presence of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna ensures all goodness, glory and righteousness. And laurels go to him who has virtue on his side. Therefore, the victory of the Pāṇḍavas was guaranteed. The welfare of Dhṛtarāṣṭra lay in bringing round his sons to seek peace with the Pāṇḍavas.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे मोक्षसन्न्यासयोगो
नामाष्टादशोऽध्याय: ॥ १८॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the eighteenth chapter entitled "The Yoga of Liberation through the path of Knowledge and Self-surrender."

The Bhagavadgītā is the divine word of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme Puruṣottama or God Himself, who is adored by the whole animate and inanimate kingdom, is full of the six divine properties, and is Bliss and Consciousness solidified. The scripture is a mine of endless mysteries. It is by the grace of the supremely compassionate Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa that its inner meaning can be partially understood. He alone who ponders the Gītā with a heart brimming over with supreme reverence and pure loving devotion directly perceives the grace of the Lord and can obtain a glimpse of the real character of the Gītā. Therefore, seekers of blessedness would do well to place before them the ideal of Arjuna, the prince among devotees, and cultivating his divine virtues should hear, study and ruminate over the Gītā with faith and devotion; and they should whole-heartedly devote themselves to spiritual practice according to their individual capacity in pursuance of the Lord's behests. Those who proceed on the above lines are inspired with ever new thoughts and feelings of a supremely blissful, unique and transcendent character. Attaining absolute purity of mind and enjoying the exceptional grace of the Lord, they speedily realize Him.

Some of Our English Publications

1318 **Śrī Rāmacaritamānasa** (With Hindi Text Transliteration & English Translation)

452, 453 **Śrīmad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa** (With Sanskrit Text and English Translation) Set of 2 volumes

564, 565 **Śrīmad Bhāgavata** (With Sanskrit Text and English Translation) Set

1080, 1081 **Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā Sādhaka-Sañjīvanī** (By Swami Ramsukhdas) (English Commentary) Set of 2 Volumes

457 **Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā Tattva-Vivecanī** (By Jayadayal Goyandka) Detailed Commentary

455 **Bhagavadgītā** (With Sanskrit Text and English Translation) Pocket size

534 „ „ (Bound)

1223 **Bhagavadgītā (Roman Gītā)** (With Sanskrit Text Transliteration and English Translation)

456 **Śrī Rāmacaritamānasa** (With Hindi Text and English Translation)

1528 **Hanumān Cālīsā** (Roman) (Pocket Size)

1491 **Mohana** (Story with the Picture)

1492 **Rāma Lalā** („ „ „)

By Jayadayal Goyandka

477 **Gems of Truth** [Vol. I]

478 „ „ [Vol. II]

480 **Instructive Eleven Stories**

1285 **Moral Stories**

1284 **Some Ideal Characters of Rāmāyaṇa**

1245 **Some Exemplary Characters of the Mahābhārata**

1125 **Five Divine Abodes**

520 **Secret of Jñānayoga**

521 „ „ **Premayoga**

522 „ „ **Karmayoga**

523 „ „ **Bhaktiyoga**

1501 **Real Love**

By Hanuman Prasad Poddar

484 **Look Beyond the Veil**

622 **How to Attain Eternal Happiness?**

485 **Path to Divinity**

620 **The Divine Name and Its Practice**

By Swami Ramsukhdas

1470 **For Salvation of Mankind**

619 **Ease in God-realization**

487 **Gītā Mādhurya**

472 **How to Lead A Household Life**

634 **God is Everything**

552 **Way to Attain the Supreme Bliss**

SPECIAL EDITIONS

1391 **The Bhagavadgītā** (Sanskrit Text and English Translation) Pocket Size

1411 **Gītā Roman** (Sanskrit text, Transliteration & English Translation) Book Size

1407 **The Drops of Nectar** (By Swami Ramsukhdas)

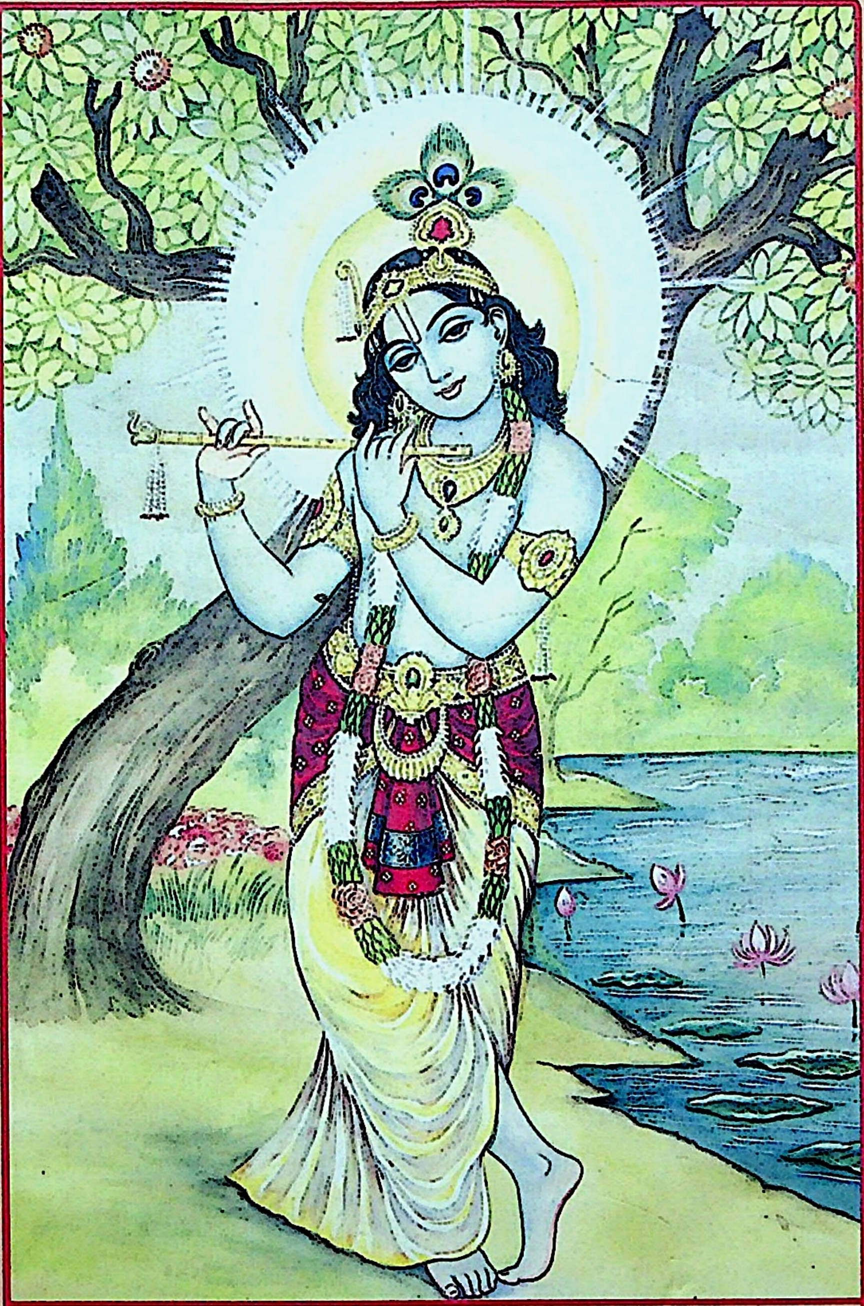
1406 **Gītā Mādhurya** (By Swami Ramsukhdas)

1438 **Discovery of Truth and Immortality** (By Swami Ramsukhdas)

1413 **All is God** (By Swami Ramsukhdas)

1414 **The Story of Mīrā Bāī** (Bankey Behari)

website : **www.gitapress.org** | e-mail : **booksales@gitapress.org**



ananyāścintayanto māṁ ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānāṁ yogakṣemaṁ vahāmyaham

ISBN 81-293-0031-1

Gita Press, Gorakhpur—273005
Ph. (0551) 2334721, Fax : 2336997